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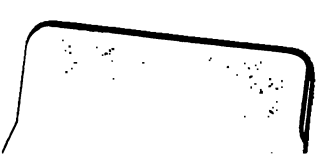


In the University of Oxford

with the most sincere wishes

Philadelphia, Sept. 20, 1872

Valentine M. Ho-

MEMOIR

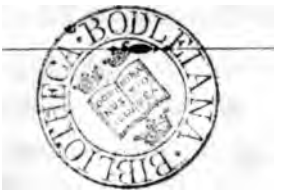
OF

VALENTINE MOTT, M. D., LL. D.,

PROFESSOR OF SURGERY IN THE UNIVERSITY OF THE CITY OF NEW YORK;
MEMBER OF THE INSTITUTE OF FRANCE.

BY

S. D. GROSS, M. D., LL. D.



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PREFACE.

FIVE summers ago, while passing a few weeks at one of our celebrated watering places, I had the pleasure of meeting with an old and esteemed friend, a former colleague of Dr. Mott and myself in the same school, although not at the same time. In talking over men and things, our conversation naturally turned upon the Coryphæus of American surgery, and, after mutually paying him some well-deserved compliments, I said, "If I outlive Dr. Mott, as, considering the disparity of our ages, I possibly may, I shall esteem it to be my duty, not less than my pleasure, to prepare a discourse upon his life and character for the benefit and instruction of my pupils." He cordially agreed with me, not only that we owed him a great debt of gratitude for the exalted services he had rendered to the profession, but

that the example of such a man, if properly portrayed, could not fail to exercise a most salutary influence upon our medical youths, in awaking in them habits of industry and a laudable ambition to emulate his many virtues. The great surgeon, in the providence of God, has passed away, with a world-wide reputation and an imperishable name, and I now fulfil my self-imposed vow.

My acquaintance with Dr. Mott commenced in the winter of 1828, in the amphitheatre of Rutgers Medical College, during a brief visit at New York. Having learned that he would meet his class at a certain hour in the morning, and anxious to see and hear a man who, although he had hardly reached the meridian of life, already occupied the highest round in the ladder of fame, I made my way to his private room, where I had the good fortune to be presented to him by his illustrious colleague, Dr. Hosack. His discourse, listened to with profound attention and respect by his young auditors, was upon fractures of the skull, a subject to the study of which, as he

informed me, he had devoted much time and reflection. The exercises ended, a brief conversation ensued, when a cordial shake of the hand closed the interview. Four years after, during the height of the Asiatic cholera, when that ruthless malady was daily sweeping away upwards of three hundred citizens of New York, I had the pleasure of meeting Dr. Mott again, now as a guest at his house; for a friend had given me a letter of introduction which secured to me all that courtly consideration for which he was so distinguished. In 1850, I was appointed his successor in the chair of surgery in the University of the City of New York, and was again received by him with the same kindness and hospitality which he had extended to me eighteen years before. Our last interview occurred in 1863, when we met as members of an Examining Board appointed by Dr. Hammond, Surgeon-General of the United States Army, to deliberate upon matters of grave interest to our wounded soldiers.

It will thus be perceived that my acquaintance with Dr. Mott, although never intimate, extended

through a period of many years; and, it is hardly necessary to add, that, as one of his countrymen, allied to him by similarity of taste and pursuit, I watched with pride and satisfaction his lofty and brilliant career as one of the great surgeons of the age.

The composition of this biographical sketch was to me a source of unalloyed pleasure. It was like the contemplation of a beautiful landscape, mellowed by the gorgeous rays of the setting sun; or like a walk, in a bright summer's morning, along the banks of a quiet and modest stream, enlivened by the songs of birds, and studded with magnificent trees and flowers, filling the air with their delicious perfume.

It is proper to add that an abstract of this Memoir was read before the Faculties and Students of the two medical schools of this city last December, and soon after, by special invitation, before the Bellevue Hospital Medical College of New York.

JEFFERSON MEDICAL COLLEGE,
PHILADELPHIA, March 1st, 1868.

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MEMOIR

OF

VALENTINE MOTT, M.D., LL.D.

CHAPTER I.

FIRST TWENTY-FOUR YEARS.

Preliminary education—Studies medicine—His private preceptor—Attends lectures—Graduation—Visits Europe—His London teachers—The University of Edinburgh.

WHEN a great and good man dies, it is fitting that his fellow-citizens, especially the members of his own profession, should pause to contemplate his virtues, and unite in paying a just tribute of affection and esteem to his memory. It is fitting that the age which owned him, and which he adorned and illustrated, should make a recognition of his services in order that those who may come after him may emulate his character, and thus increase the measure of their own usefulness. Biography is a mental portrait, or, as Good Old Fuller terms it, a perspective glass, reflecting alike the vices and the virtues of men; it is more—it is philosophy, the philosophy of individuality, teaching by example. "The record of the life of a good man is," to use the language of Milton, "the precious life-blood of a master-spirit, embalmed and treasured up on purpose to a life beyond life." Of all the studies that can engage attention, biography is at once the most fascinating and the

most useful in moulding and directing human conduct. When a person has attained to extraordinary eminence, we feel almost an instinctive desire to scan his intellect and to inquire into the means which he employed to accomplish his end; whether his distinction was due to fortuitous circumstances, or solely to the force of his genius and talents.

The man whose life I desire to delineate was no ordinary personage. He early sowed the seeds of his greatness. His reputation was built up by able hands. His career, brilliant beyond that of most men in the medical profession, extended through a period of nearly four-fifths of a century. To epitomize his biography is therefore no easy task, and yet this is all that the space allotted to me will permit.

Hardly two years and a half have elapsed since the messenger of God, standing at the grave of Valentine Mott, uttered the solemn words, "Earth to earth, dust to dust, ashes to ashes," and the crowds of friends, acquaintances, and professional brethren that followed his remains to their last resting place retraced their steps with sorrowing hearts to their homes in the great metropolis. Every one felt that New York had lost one of its most venerated citizens, medical science a most zealous votary, and American surgery its acknowledged head. The grief which followed his de-

mise was not confined to his own country; his fame had gone abroad, and physicians everywhere knew and appreciated his merits.

It is confessedly difficult, under any circumstances, to write the biography of a contemporary. On the one hand, there is great danger of indulging in fulsome eulogy; and, on the other, of being blinded by jealousy and prejudice. In either event, injustice is apt to be done alike to the subject and to the truth of history. Whether the present instance affords an exception to the rule others must determine. I think I comprehend the character of Dr. Mott sufficiently to avoid both extremes. His career was so quiet and serene, his conduct in all his relations, private and public, so pure and virtuous, that it will be easy to seize the prominent features of his mind, and to place them in bold relief before the world. It has been truly said by Thomas Carlyle that a well-written life is almost as rare as a well-spent one. That of Mott should be written as much with the heart as with the pen. My only qualification for the task consists in a lively sympathy for the great surgeon, in a tolerably intimate acquaintance with the history of his career, and in the pleasure arising from a similarity of pursuits.

Valentine Mott, whose name will be perpetuated as long as surgical science shall be honored among men, was born at Glen Cove, Long Island, on the

20th of August, 1785, and consequently within a few years after the close of the great struggle which eventuated in the establishment of our independence as a free and sovereign people. The father, Henry Mott, was a pupil of the elder Bard, and, after having practised medicine at different places, but more particularly at New York, died at an advanced age in that city, in 1840. The mother was an only daughter of Samuel Way, of North Hempstead. The son, no doubt, owed much of his success in life to her careful and pious training.

The great ancestor of Valentine was Adam Mott, an Englishman, who settled on Long Island soon after the middle of the seventeenth century. He was one of the original disciples of George Fox, the founder of the Society of Friends, an institution distinguished alike, at least in its more primitive state, for the purity of its morals, its love of freedom, and its Christian beneficence. It is not surprising that such a religion should have deeply impressed itself upon the minds and hearts of the descendants of Adam Mott. They were all Quakers; and Valentine retained his respect and admiration for the sect to the close of his long and valuable life.

Of the early life of Valentine Mott—his tastes, habits, and pursuits—no information has reached me. That it was sweet and gentle, in strict ac-

cordance with the tenets and practices of the faith in which he was educated, and in full consonance with his own sweet and gentle nature, no one can doubt. The boy was father to the man, in the most rigid sense of the term; docile, obedient, pure in mind, cautious in speech, neat in dress, erect in person, walking as one who reverences God, and who respects the rights and feelings of his fellows; in a word, a perfect gentleman. Those who knew Dr. Mott later in life, in the full maturity of his intellect and fame, and remember his courtly bearing, could picture the boy in no other light.

He received his classical education in a private seminary at Newtown, where his father, for a time, practised his profession. What attainments he made here I have no means of knowing. That they were highly respectable may be inferred from the fact that he was always a diligent and conscientious student, and that he retained his fondness for the Greek and Latin languages up to the time of his death. Even the name of the master of the seminary appears to have been lost, as I can nowhere find any mention of it. If he had been a man of any note, it would no doubt have been recorded by Thompson, in his History of Long Island, a work remarkable for its research and fidelity.

In 1804, young Mott, then about nineteen years

of age, enrolled himself as a private pupil in the office of his kinsman, Dr. Valentine Seaman, of New York, under whose instruction he remained until the spring of 1807, when, after having attended two full courses of lectures in Columbia College, he was invested with the honors of the doctorate by that institution, then the only school of medicine in that city. The thesis which he presented on the occasion was an Experimental Inquiry into the Chemical and Medicinal Properties of the Statice Limonium of Linnæus, illustrated by a beautiful steel engraving of that plant, and spread over fifty-eight pages of a closely-printed duodecimo brochure. The plant, vulgarly known as the marsh rosemary, is indigenous to this country, and possesses valuable astringent properties, which render it, it is said, a useful substitute for nutgall and tannin in the treatment of internal hemorrhage, diarrhœa, and hemorrhoids. The dissertation exhibits much labor and patient research, added to accuracy of observation.

The private preceptor of Dr. Mott was no ordinary man. The son of an eminent New York merchant, he was a pupil at the University of Pennsylvania, in the palmy days of Shippen, Kuhn, and Rush, published a number of valuable papers on medical and other topics, delivered lectures on midwifery, medicine, and surgery, was one of the surgeons of the New York Hospital, took an act-

ive part in the introduction of vaccination into the United States, and died, universally regretted, in 1817, in the forty-eighth year of his age. In a glowing eulogy pronounced upon his character by one who knew him well and intimately, the late Dr. John W. Francis, he is described as an astute physician, a laborious practitioner, and a man of rare benevolence and humanity; attributes which entitle him to a high rank among his contemporaries. It was in the office of Dr. Seaman that young Mott first became fully inspired with that love for his profession which formed ever after such a remarkable feature in his character. It was his first votive altar, upon which he daily kindled the fire of his ambition.

His conduct, as a young student, was, in the highest degree, correct and exemplary. He lost no time in listlessness, or idle dalliance; he was always at his place in the lecture-room; devoted much of his time and attention to the cultivation of anatomy and surgery; was unusually popular with his classmates; and was graduated with high honor.

Very shortly after he received his degree, young Mott repaired to London, to extend and perfect his medical education. He had no sooner arrived in the British metropolis than he placed himself under the tuition of Mr., afterward Sir Astley Cooper, then rapidly approaching the zenith of

his fame as one of the most illustrious surgeons that have ever lived. Abandoning himself at once to the most active exertion, he devoted most of his time to the study of practical anatomy, the operations upon the cadaver, visits to the hospitals, and the prelections of the great masters of the healing art. Among the latter, by whose instructions he more especially profited, may be mentioned the names of Cline, Abernethy, Haighton, and Charles Bell, whose labors have shed so much lustre upon English surgery, and who, with Sir Astley Cooper as the common centre, form a galaxy of illustrious savans such as the world has seldom witnessed in such close juxtaposition.

From London Mott went to Edinburgh to avail himself of the advantages of the instruction of Gregory, Monro, Duncan, Home, Hope, and Thomson. The medical school of the Scotch metropolis enjoyed then, as it does now, a very high reputation. The mantle of Cullen, rendered immortal by his teachings and his writings, had fallen worthily upon the shoulders of James Gregory, a man of superior classical attainments, celebrated not less for the purity and elegance of his Latinity than his eloquence as a lecturer, and his rare skill as a practitioner. For upwards of a third of a century he was the most fashionable physician in Edinburgh, whose word was law both in and out of the profession. Alexander Monro, the

third of that name—a name renowned in science —was professor of anatomy, and, although greatly inferior, both as a teacher and an author, to his father and grandfather, labored hard to uphold the character of the University. Black, one of the most illustrious philosophers of the age, the Nestor of chemical revolution, as he has been styled by Fourcroy, had recently retired from the chair of Chemistry, and had been succeeded by Home, who, in turn, had made way for Hope. Duncan, a physician of extensive learning, an able lecturer, and a facile writer, was professor of the Institutes of Medicine. John Thomson occupied the chair of Military Surgery, for a long time the only one of the kind in any British school of medicine. He is principally recollected at the present day by his great work on inflammation, a work of vast labor and erudition, long the only text-book on the subject in Europe and in this country.

Such were the principal teachers in the University, while outside of it, perched as it were upon a lofty eminence, a fit resting-place for an eagle, there was one in reality far greater, in point of talent and genius, than any of these, a man whose wonderful power of fascination gave him a hold upon students such as hardly any individual, either before or since his time, ever wielded. To rare eloquence and polemic ability, he added a tho-

rough knowledge of anatomy, great descriptive powers, a keen sense of sarcasm, and unrivalled skill and daring as an operator; qualities which rendered him one of the most attractive and popular of teachers, and one of the most charming of companions. This person was John Bell, the author of an undying work on surgery, and the brother of Charles, whose researches into the functions of the nervous system place his name by the side of that of William Harvey, the discoverer of the circulation of the blood.*

Of Dugald Stewart, whose prelections on intellectual philosophy he regularly attended, young Mott could never speak with sufficient enthusiasm; he regarded him, in common with Edinburgh students in general, as a man of gigantic mind, and as one of the most captivating and instructive of teachers, with manners as simple as elegant, and a voice almost as sweet as music itself. Of his extraordinary powers of fascination an idea may be formed by the following description, from

* It is not known with any degree of certainty when Mr. Bell ceased to teach surgery. Dr. John Struthers, in his charming little "Historical Sketch of the Edinburgh Anatomical School," lately published, states that it must have been about the close of the last century. If so, Dr. Mott could not have attended his lectures. However this may be, the very touch of the garments of such a man must have warmed his enthusiasm, and inspired him with increased love for his favorite studies. John Bell was the father of Scotch surgery, and the mantle, since so gracefully worn by Liston, Miller, Syme, and Fergusson, was unquestionably fashioned by his genius.

the pen of one who knew him intimately, and often listened to his discourses. "To me," says Lord Cockburn, in his posthumous memoirs, "his lectures were like the opening of the heavens. I felt that I had a soul. His noble views, unfolded in glorious sentences, elevated me into a higher world. I was as much excited and charmed as any man of cultivated taste could be, who, after being ignorant of their existence, was admitted to all the glories of Milton, and Cicero, and Shakspeare. This changed my whole nature. In short, Dugald Stewart was one of the greatest of didactic orators. Had he lived in ancient times, his memory would have descended to us as that of one of the finest of the old eloquent sages. But his lot was better cast. Flourishing in an age which requires all the dignity of morals to counteract the tendencies of physical pursuits and political convulsions, he has exalted the character of his country and his generation. No intelligent pupil of his ever ceased to respect philosophy, or was ever false to his principles, without feeling the crime aggravated by the recollection of the morality that Dugald Stewart had taught him."

I am unable to state how long Dr. Mott sojourned at Edinburgh; he probably remained there somewhat over a year. During his residence, both there and at London, he formed many acquaintances both in and out of the profession, to

which he ever after looked back with pleasure and satisfaction. The letters which he had taken with him to the two capitals secured him the entrée to the best society, and thus enabled him to form a more correct estimate of English and Scotch character. Of the two cities he could not fail to award the palm to Edinburgh. Its University enjoyed a world-wide reputation; its Bar was noted for its great talents and attainments; and there was a literary coterie, composed of Scott, Jeffrey, Sidney Smith, and others, a galaxy of intellect, learning, wit, and humor, which cast its burning rays not only over Europe, but Asia and America. The very atmosphere of such a place must have exercised an important influence in shaping the tastes and character of the young American student.

Having refreshed himself at these great fountains of medical science, he returned, in the autumn of 1809, after an absence of upwards of two years and a half, to New York, to enter upon the active duties of his profession, for which he was now so well qualified. Paris, since so celebrated as a seat of medical learning, he did not visit until many years after, when his fame, as a great operator, had preceded him to the French capital.

CHAPTER II.

SETTLEMENT IN NEW YORK.

Early professional career in New York—Rapid success in practice—Delivers a private course of lectures—Is appointed Professor of Surgery—Rutger's College—Account of his colleagues.

DR. MOTT's success in New York was rapid and brilliant. His handsome person, his elegant manners, and his great accomplishments attracted universal attention, and he soon became the centre of an admiring circle, with the sobriquet of "the handsome young Quaker Doctor." In the following winter he delivered a private course of lectures on surgery, and shortly after was elevated to the professorship of surgery in his alma mater, an office which he held until Columbia College was merged in the College of Physicians and Surgeons, when he was appointed to the same chair with Wright Post, Hosack, Mitchill, Macneven, and Francis, all men of distinguished talent, as his colleagues. He continued in this institution, lecturing with marked ability to rapidly increasing classes, until 1826, when, in consequence of some tyrannical acts of the Trustees, the Faculty withdrew in a body.

A new school was immediately formed by the

retiring professors, under the auspices of Rutger's College, at New Brunswick, New Jersey. The organization was completed by the introduction of Dr. John D. Godman into the anatomical chair, and Dr. John Griscom into the chemical. To conceive of a more able corps of teachers than this would be difficult. There certainly was not, at that time, any superior to it, whether we regard the talents of its members, their scientific and literary attainments, or their ability and eloquence as lecturers. The school, after a prosperous career of five years, during a part of which it was connected with the Geneva College of Western New York, was compelled to close its doors on account of some technical illegality respecting its power of conferring degrees.

Of the men who were associated with Dr. Mott in founding the new college a few passing reminiscences will not be without interest. They were all physicians of note, and they have all gone to "that undiscovered country from whose bourne no traveller returns."

Dr. David Hosack, the eldest member of the Faculty, adorned the chair of medicine, and never was a professor's gown worn with greater grace or dignity. He was descended from a Scotch family, and received his literary education at Princeton College during the Presidency of the renowned Dr. Witherspoon, one of the signers of the De-

claration of Independence. Endowed by nature with a noble presence and brilliant talents, he was an elegant lecturer, an able writer, and a finished scholar. His reputation, at the period here referred to, was of the highest order, and he was almost universally regarded, for upwards of a quarter of a century before his death, as the fittest person in New York to be consulted in all medical cases of difficulty or danger. He had a remarkably clear, almost intuitive, perception of the nature and seat of disease, great adroitness in diagnosis, extraordinary fertility and readiness in the application of remedies, and a rare faculty of inspiring his patients with confidence in his skill. As a lecturer, he possessed eloquence, and a manner at once dignified and impressive, with great command of language, and a ready power of utterance, which rendered him eminently attractive to students. He had, early in life, enjoyed the advantages of foreign study and travel, and was elected a member of the Royal Society of London soon after his entrance into the profession, in consideration of an able paper which he had published a short time previously on vision. His writings, which were chiefly medical, elicited an unusual share of criticism both at home and abroad; and although replete with interest, they abound too much in hypothesis and speculation to be enduring. The work upon which his fame, as an author, will

mainly rest, is his Life of De Witt Clinton, which was composed with marked ability, and forms a valuable addition to the literature of the country. Dr. Hosack died of apoplexy in 1835, in the sixty-seventh year of his age, soon after the great fire in New York, in which he sustained heavy pecuniary losses, which, it has been said, hastened his demise.

Dr. John W. Francis, a name ever to be spoken with reverence and affection, was of German descent, and born at New York, in 1789, four years later than Dr. Mott, who, nevertheless, survived him. Their active lives ran parallel with each other. For fifty years they walked the same streets, entered the same dwellings, and often felt the same pulse. Their friendship, sincere, cordial, and uninterrupted, was marked by a thousand acts of courtesy and kindness. The beautiful eulogy which Mott pronounced upon his character before the New York Academy of Medicine, shortly after his decease, in May, 1861, is a tribute of the deepest tenderness and devotion, as rare as it is touching. He had watched the career of Francis from an early period of his life, had often listened to the story of his manly struggles for an education, had seen him rise to eminence and usefulness as a practitioner and a teacher of an important branch of medical science, and for many years had stood with him side by side as it were

as a colleague in the lecture-room. He felt, as he gave utterance to his melancholy strains, that he had lost a well-tried and faithful friend; and the sadness which he experienced on the occasion was probably not a little heightened by the conviction that, in the course of natural events, he must soon follow him. "In peaceful sorrow," says the venerable surgeon, "there is a kind of joy. The human heart bereaved finds gratification in mourning over its loss. Its anguish is assuaged by indulging in gentle melancholy. 'Strike the harp in my hall,' exclaims the mighty Fingal to the bard—'strike the harp in my hall, and let Fingal hear the song. Pleasant is the joy of grief. It is like the shower of spring when it softens the branch of the oak, and the young leaf lifts its head.'"

The character of Francis may be summed up in a few words. With a capacious brain and a lofty forehead, the dome of the soul, he had a high order of intellect; his mind was stored with the riches of knowledge; he was a profound thinker, an eloquent lecturer, a good writer, a sagacious, ready practitioner, a charming companion, sparkling with wit and humor, a kind-hearted man, generous to a fault, one who valued learning and despised everything that was sordid and contemptible.

William J. Macneven, who occupied the chair of materia medica, was a native of Ireland, but,

in 1805, with a number of his countrymen, sought an asylum in the United States after the unsuccessful attempt of Robert Emmet and his associates to shake off the British yoke which had so long and so heavily oppressed them. He was a graceful lecturer, an accomplished classical scholar, an ardent patriot, and an upright, estimable man. He was the author of a number of scientific papers and political tracts, was one of the editors of the "New York Medical and Philosophical Journal," was a great lover of books, and spoke, it is asserted, German and French with as much fluency as English. He expired at New York on the 12th of July, 1841, in the eightieth year of his age, universally regretted by all who knew him.

Dr. John D. Godman, a native of Maryland, and early in life a printer by occupation, was Mott's associate in the new college enterprise only for two sessions. Long before the termination of the second course of lectures it was evident that the labor was too severe for the endurance of his bodily powers, and he was accordingly obliged to resign his chair, and to seek relaxation and health in a more genial climate. He spent several months in the West Indies, but without any material benefit, and finally, on his return, settled at Germantown, Pennsylvania, where, under the hospitable roof of a kind friend, he eked out the remnant of his days.

Godman was emphatically a child of genius, with an astonishing aptitude for the acquisition of knowledge, acute penetration, and great readiness as a writer and speaker. Commencing his studies under unusual difficulties, he, nevertheless, made the most extraordinary progress, and early achieved a most commanding reputation, especially as a lecturer, naturalist, and author. He was by far the most brilliant and popular teacher of anatomy in his day in this country. As a neat and rapid dissector he probably never had an equal anywhere. Notwithstanding, however, his skill in the use of the scalpel, he signally failed as an operator, for the same reason, perhaps, as the illustrious Albert von Haller, who taught surgery for sixteen years, but never performed an operation upon the living subject for fear, as he often avowed, of giving pain. Both lacked courage and decision, qualities which, unless innate, can only be acquired by constant familiarity with the sight of blood and the screams of the patient.

As a linguist, also, Godman possessed great powers; for he had not only an excellent acquaintance with Greek and Latin, but an intimate knowledge of the French, German, Dutch, and Italian. He had, indeed, a most happy faculty of surmounting obstacles; for, to genius of a high order he added patience, and to patience industry, and to industry perseverance; to all, and above all, a

great love for his species, and an unbounded veneration for Deity, whom he saw and worshipped in all His works. Death snatched him away at the early age of thirty-seven, the victim of poverty and pulmonary consumption, under which he had nobly struggled for many years, working literally for his daily subsistence up to the last hour of his precious life. Although he died so young, the fame of his genius had spread over this entire continent, at a time when fame travelled much more slowly than she does now; and the announcement of his demise caused universal grief among our profession as well as among the naturalists of America and Europe.

The chair vacated by the lamented Godman was filled, in 1828, by Dr. George Bushe, an Irish gentleman, at the time of his appointment a surgeon in the British army. He remained attached to the College until its close in 1832. Tall and erect in person, with a light complexion and a commanding presence, he was one of the best lecturers I have ever heard, learned, fluent, and enthusiastic; a bold, dashing operator, and the author of a treatise on the Diseases, Injuries, and Malformations of the Rectum, long without a rival in the English language. His death was occasioned by phthisis, in 1837, before he had reached the full meridian of his life.

John Griscom, the Professor of Chemistry, the

descendant of a respectable Quaker family, was a native of New Jersey, where he was born in 1774. Although his early education had been much neglected, yet, by indomitable industry and perseverance, he surmounted every obstacle to improvement, and eventually achieved a high scientific and literary reputation. For nearly a third of a century he swayed the chemical sceptre of New York. To ease of elocution, he added grace and simplicity of manner, deliberate utterance, exact diction, and a thorough acquaintance with his subject, which made him one of the most charming and attractive of teachers. His public lectures were attended by many of the most fashionable and distinguished citizens; and it has been asserted that he did more to inspire and diffuse a taste for the popular study of chemistry than any other man in the country. He was a devoted friend of general education, carried on an extensive correspondence with scientific and benevolent men both at home and abroad, published numerous papers in the medical and philosophical journals of his time, and left a valuable and instructive work on foreign travel, in two volumes. Dr. Griscom died in 1852, at the ripe age of 78 years.

After the downfall of Rutger's Medical College Dr. Mott resumed his connection with the College of Physicians and Surgeons as Professor of Operative Surgery with Surgical and Pathological

Anatomy, the Principles and Practice of Surgery being taught by Dr. Alexander H. Stevens. He remained in the school until 1835, when he resigned in consequence of ill health and his projected visit to Europe.

Upon the establishment of the Medical Department of the University of the City of New York, in 1840, he was unanimously elected Professor of Surgery and President of the Medical Faculty. This honor was conferred upon him while abroad, and was the more flattering to his feelings because it was unsolicited. All his colleagues were gentlemen who, like himself, either already enjoyed great celebrity as teachers, or soon became distinguished as such. The names of Granville Sharp Pattison, John Revere, Martyn Paine, John W. Draper, and Gunning S. Bedford, are all inscribed upon the scroll of fame. Under the auspices of this Faculty the school rapidly rose into notice, with classes ranging annually from 350 to 400 pupils, representing all the different States of the Union as well as many foreign countries. The school was a complete success. Dr. Mott retained his connection with it until 1850, when he resigned, and went to Europe. On his return in the following autumn he entered the College of Physicians and Surgeons as Professor of Operative Surgery and Surgical Anatomy, a position which was subsequently abandoned for the office of Eme-

ritus-Professor of Surgery in the University, which he held up to the time of his death in 1865. Of the causes which led to these various changes, and which must have occasioned him no little vexation and annoyance, it is not necessary here to speak. It is sufficient to observe that they were such as he could not control, and which reflect no discredit upon him, in any manner, either as a gentleman or as a professor. Those who are acquainted with the history of medical institutions in this country know how fluctuating is their character, and what trivial causes often effect their prosperity and even their downfall in a single day. Founded, for the most part, by private enterprise, they, unfortunately, too often contain, at their very inception, the seed of their own decay and ultimate destruction. In a republican country, like ours, where the masses and not the Government are the rulers, all institutions, literary, medical, and scientific, are, in general, short-lived.

CHAPTER III.

FOREIGN TRAVELS.

Visits Europe—Interview with Sir Astley Cooper—Sojourn at Paris—French Surgeons—Graefe and Dieffenbach—Athens—Epidaurus—Constantinople.

In 1835, ill-health, as already intimated, compelled Dr. Mott, exhausted by unremitting labor, to relinquish for a time his practice, and to seek repose and relaxation in a foreign country. He had now been engaged in the active duties of his profession for nearly thirty years, during which he had earned a world-wide reputation as one of the first surgeons of the age. Previously to his departure, his medical friends, with Hosack, Francis, Macneven, Delafield, and other distinguished confrères at their head, tendered him a public dinner, as a token of their profound appreciation of his character, and of their high sense of the services he had rendered to surgical science.

Upwards of a quarter of a century had elapsed since, as a pupil of medicine, he had bid adieu to England, and now his first impulse, upon touching its shores, was to hasten to London, to greet his old friend and preceptor, Sir Astley Cooper, the Nestor of British surgery. A meeting between

two such men is an unusual occurrence. The pupil had long ago more than realized the most sanguine expectations of his illustrious master. Each had the proud satisfaction of knowing that he was the accredited head of the surgeons of the age in his own country. Cooper, although nearly seventy years old, still retained his early vigor and enthusiasm; he loved his profession with all the ardor of a devotee, and he daily, even at that period of life, when most men require repose, performed an amount of labor that would have put to shame many of his younger brethren, less zealous and ambitious than himself. His whole career was one series of brilliant successes. The son of a poor but respectable country clergyman in Norfolk, England, he studied medicine in London, and by his industry, talent, and correct deportment, rapidly attained to eminence. He was appointed at an early age Surgeon to Guy's and St. Thomas' Hospitals, enjoyed for many years the most lucrative and aristocratic practice in London, and was successively Surgeon to three sovereigns, George IV., William IV., and Queen Victoria. His income from his business alone is said to have netted in one single year £23,000. He left an enormous estate, the result of his unaided exertion. He was the first to ligate the aorta and the common carotid artery for the cure of aneurism; and he has bequeathed to posterity numerous mono-

graphs on surgery, works of vast personal research, of careful clinical observation, and of inestimable practical value.

Having spent some weeks in the British metropolis, in the midst of much that was interesting and agreeable, as well as instructive, Dr. Mott successively visited Scotland, Ireland, France, Belgium, Switzerland, Italy, and Germany, and, after an absence of sixteen months, returned to the United States, with his health, as he had supposed, permanently reinstated. In this, however, he was disappointed, and he, therefore, after a brief sojourn, again embarked for Europe, determined to extend his travels into Greece, Egypt, Turkey, and Asia Minor. Establishing his head-quarters at Paris, he made annual excursions into different countries, and finally bid adieu to Europe in 1841, completely reinvigorated in mind and body. In every place he visited he met with a reception worthy of his exalted reputation. This courtesy was by no means confined to the members of his own profession. Men of the highest renown in every walk of life, and even crowned heads, vied with each other to do him homage.

At Paris, where he was most cordially received by the whole medical fraternity, he was treated with special courtesy and kindness by Louis Philippe and his family. Here he frequently saw Baron Larrey, the father of modern military sur-

gery, the hero of a hundred battles, the friend and companion of Napoleon during all his memorable campaigns until the sun of that great and wonderful man set forever on the field of Waterloo. The frosts of nearly eighty winters had dimmed his eye, but in no degree diminished his veneration and enthusiasm for his sovereign, who always spoke of him as the most honest and virtuous man he had ever known. "If the army," said Napoleon, "ever erect a monument of gratitude, it should be to Larrey." In his will he left him 100,000 francs. No surgeon, since the days of Good Old Ambrose Paré, had so completely enjoyed the love and confidence of an army as Larrey. He was emphatically the soldier's idol; and the Emperor himself, popular as he was, hardly exercised as unbounded an influence in the camp as this great surgeon in the hospital. At the period of Dr. Mott's visit, Larrey was Surgeon-in-Chief to that noble institution, the Hospital for Invalids, the receptacle of at least 4000 men disabled in war. After stating that he had repeatedly accompanied him through the wards of this great asylum, an honor alike to France and to humanity, he remarks: "It was delightful to behold the almost religious veneration with which his old companions in arms received and welcomed him as he passed from bed to bed. The eyes of these decrepit men would glisten with joy at his ap-

proach; and, if sad from suffering, he would cheer their drooping spirits by recounting to them some memorable victory in which they had both participated. I have heard him sound in their ears the magic words, Lodi, Marengo, and Austerlitz, and Mount Tabor! and the effect was electric and wonderful. It was like the neighing of the war-horse at the sound of the trumpet."

Larrey has left behind him precious works, the record of his numerous observations and operations in the field and in the hospital; works of transcendent excellence, written with the pen of a master, combining solidity of information with the charm and interest of a romance. Of the unexampled opportunities which he enjoyed for the practical exercise of military surgery a faint idea may be formed when it is stated that, after the battle of Austerlitz, he performed more than two hundred operations, never relaxing his efforts to relieve the wounded until his knife fell powerless from his hand. At Wagram he removed fourteen arms at the shoulder-joint. It reflects no little credit upon the good taste and intelligence of the American profession that all the works of this great surgeon have been translated into the English language by American physicians, the late Professor Wilmot Hall, of Baltimore, having led the way in this commendable enterprise.

Baron Larrey died in July, 1842. Pariset, soon

after his death, pronounced a glowing eulogy upon his life and character before the Royal Academy of Medicine, and two statues have since been raised to him, one of them in the court of the Val de Grâce Hospital, the scene of the labors of his declining years. The life of Larrey is full of romance, and affords a sublime subject for the study of the philosopher, the poet, the painter, and the historian.

During his sojourn in the French capital, Dr. Mott spent much of his time in the great hospitals there, witnessing the more striking cases of diseases and accidents, and carefully investigating everything that presented the slightest novelty, especially in operative surgery, his own favorite pursuit. He was particularly interested in the study of orthopœdic surgery, then recently founded by Stromeyer, and afterwards so much improved by Guérin, Scoutetten, and other French tenotomists. As a consequence of this study he intended, shortly after his return from Europe, to open an institution for the treatment of this class of deformities at Bloomingdale; but was finally induced, through the persuasion of his friends, to abandon the project, principally on the ground that it would not be popular with the profession!

At the Neckar Hospital, as well as in the social circle, he often met with Mons. Civiale, the originator of lithotripsy, one of the greatest triumphs

of science and humanity ever achieved by man. Without a rival in his particular department, it is impossible, says Mott, for any one to imagine the highly finished style of his manipulations. In delicacy of tact and adroitness of execution he never had an equal. Added to all this, he was one of the most amiable and gentle of men, abounding in all the charities that adorn our nature.

From Velpeau, with whom he had long been in correspondence, and who, only a few months ago, died at an advanced age, full of honor and fame, he received more than ordinary attention and courtesy. "No man," he says, "could have treated a brother more kindly and cordially than he did me." After speaking of him as a dexterous operator, an admirable teacher, and a profound anatomist, he bestows upon him the high compliment of having been by far the most scientific and best read surgeon he had ever met with. Of such a man France has just reason to be proud. From the most humble beginning, he had risen, by the force of industry and genius, to the most exalted rank in his profession. His elaborate work on operative surgery affords an exhibition of learning, and a familiarity with the history of medical literature without a parallel in any language, either in ancient or modern times. His treatises on Midwifery, on Topographical Anatomy, and on the Diseases of the Mammary Gland, the first two

published soon after he entered upon his brilliant career, are all highly meritorious productions, destined to associate their author's name with the most distinguished writers of the age, and to confer upon it lasting fame.

Nothing impressed Dr. Mott, in his visits to the French hospitals, more forcibly or unpleasantly than the bad results of the operations in the hands of the different surgeons, even the most dexterous and best educated. From what he saw he was convinced that they were mainly due to the miserable system of ventilation in the wards of these establishments, and to a want of proper attention to the after-treatment, especially to an insufficiency of nutritious food and stimulants at a time when the system was exhausted by irritation and suppuration. As able diagnosticians and brilliant operators, he considered the surgeons of Paris as unequalled, but as practitioners, with a few honorable exceptions, the very worst he had ever seen; an opinion amply confirmed by the judgment and experience of more recent observers.

At Berlin, Dr. Mott had anticipated great pleasure from meeting with the celebrated surgeon, Charles Ferdinand von Graefe, who was the first to repeat the ligation of the innominate artery, three years after he himself had performed the operation. His disappointment may be better

imagined than described when he learned that he was absent from the city on account of ill health.

The career of Von Graefe, as a surgeon, was, in every respect, most brilliant. He enjoyed in Prussia the same high consideration as Mott in the United States, Dupuytren in France, and Sir Astley Cooper in Great Britain. Born at Warsaw in 1787, two years after our own great countryman, he studied medicine at Halle and Leipzig, took his degree in 1807, entered the military service in 1811, and was appointed Surgeon-in-Chief of the Prussian army in 1822. He finally settled at Berlin as Professor of Surgery and Director of the Ophthalmic Clinic in the famous University of that city. He invented several valuable instruments, perfected rhinoplasty, and published a number of excellent monographs on his favorite branch of science, besides editing, conjointly with the illustrious Von Walther, from 1819 to 1828, a journal of Surgery and Ophthalmology, a periodical of extraordinary celebrity. His labors in rhinoplasty created a new era in reconstructive surgery in his own country, where the operation is universally known as the German method. Students flocked to him from all parts of the world to attend his lectures, and his fame was so great that when, late in life, he visited England, he was received with distinguished courtesy by the British sovereign. He died in July, 1840, leaving, as the

result of his personal exertion and prudence, an estate valued at $3,000,000.

From Johann Friedrich Dieffenbach, the townsman of Von Graefe, not less renowned for his skill in rhinoplasty than as the author of the brilliant operation for the cure of strabismus, Dr. Mott received the most devoted consideration. He was particularly struck, during one of his visits to the great Charity Hospital, with the number and variety of his new noses, and lost in surprise at his marvellous dexterity as an operator. Dieffenbach was, in truth, a wonderful personage, a most daring, dashing surgeon, a fascinating lecturer, a good writer, a fast man, a roué, and a spendthrift! He had a boundless European fame. His name was as familiar in Paris as in Berlin. Few men ever did so great an amount of delicate surgery as he. He was nose-maker for several kingdoms, and no one in his day probably ever operated so well or so frequently for the cure of cleft-palate. He had published one large volume of a great work on operative surgery, and partly composed the second, when death overtook him in the midst of a clinical discourse, surrounded by a crowd of admiring pupils. He had a presentiment that he should not live to complete his task. "Ich erlebe es doch nicht dass es fertig wird." He had often expressed a wish that he might die suddenly. His saying was: "nur nicht sterben—das ist ein qual-

voller Kampf; aber Tod ist schön!" Death gratified his wishes. The first volume of the work appeared in 1845; the second three years later.

In Greece, the land of philosophy, poetry, literature, oratory, painting, sculpture, architecture, military glory, and commercial renown, Dr. Mott experienced the delight naturally incident to a journey through that classic and romantic country. Taking Athens as the starting-point, he penetrated deeply into the interior, and explored every object of interest and importance with an eye keenly alive to the beautiful and sublime in nature and in art. Nothing, indeed, seems to have escaped his observation. Mountain and valley, river, lake, and cavern, the tombs of heroes, physicians, and philosophers, monuments of art, soil, climate, agriculture, men, and animals, alike attracted his attention, and engaged the graphic powers of his pen. He witnessed with sorrow the wretched condition of the Greeks, especially the adult portion of the population, who seemed to be sunk too low in all the vices of Oriental indolence ever to be regenerated. "In this opinion," he remarks, "I have not been precipitate or hasty. It has not been drawn from a survey of the perfumed Athenian or Attican; but I have had an opportunity of seeing the Theban in his mountain and his capital, the Lebadean in his capital and on his beautiful plain, the Delphian about his rugged cliffs, and

the inhabitant of the mighty snow-topped Parnassus. I have viewed the whole line, from the long stretch of Mount Helicon to near the highest summit of Parnassus, from Acro-Corinth to the plains of Argos in the Morea, and but one strong feature reigns through the whole." A gloom of midnight darkness everywhere shrouded this once fairy land of the hero and the poet.

At Athens, where he was warmly welcomed by King Otho and his family, he found a medical school, under the charge of German professors, who lectured to their pupils, hardly a dozen in number, in the modern Greek language. An opportunity was here afforded him of studying the endemic diseases of the country, then little understood, and he took special pains to investigate the nature of lepra, which he concluded was only an obstinate form of syphilis. His visit to the Morea was made expressly to see the ancient city of Epidaurus, the birthplace of Æsculapius, the father of medicine. It was the ultima thule of his aspirations, the Mecca of his pilgrimage to Greece. It was here, in a spot hallowed by a thousand professional associations, that he performed his famous feat, rendered so by his American detractors, of sacrificing a cock to the memory of the ruling deity, having previously tied both carotid arteries of the honored bird, and delivered, in the presence of his companions, a brief clinical discourse, the

first, probably, ever given in that part of the world.

For this performance Dr. Mott was severely ridiculed, after the publication of his travels, especially by the medical press of his own country. It was, however, only what any intelligent physician, an enthusiastic devotee of his profession, would have done under similar circumstances. The cock was the favorite bird of the god of Medicine, and it was just as natural for a great surgeon, standing at his tomb, to offer such a sacrifice to his memory, as for Socrates, influenced by his strong religious persuasions, to request Crito, before he passed into a state of insensibility from the hemlock administered to him by the executioner, to pay a similar tribute. "Crito, we owe a cock to Æsculapius: discharge the debt, and by no means omit it."

In Constantinople, where his fame had preceded him, he was received with great distinction by the reigning Sultan, Abdul Medjid, from whose head he removed a tumor in the presence of the court physician. For this service he was invested by that sovereign with the order of Knight of Medjidichi of Constantinople.

CHAPTER IV.

SURGICAL OPERATIONS.

Ligation of the innominate artery—Excision of the lower jaw—Amputation at the hip-joint—Excision of the clavicle—Hydrorachitis—Ligation of the common iliac—Immobility of the lower jaw—Nasal polyp—Lithotomy—Qualities as an operator.

We must now go back some years, and inquire into Dr. Mott's exploits as an operator, those achievements upon which his claims to lasting fame will mainly rest. Of the many thousand operations which he performed only a very few need be specified to show that the great reputation founded upon them was justly deserved. The name of Churchill is not more indissolubly associated with the battle of Blenheim, or that of Wellington with the battle of Waterloo, than is the name of Valentine Mott with the history of surgery in the first half of the nineteenth century. What they, and others like them, accomplished with the sword aided by hordes of soldiers, he accomplished, silently and alone, with the knife. His victories and his triumphs were not less real than theirs.

It has been seen that Dr. Mott, after his return from Europe, in 1809, was not long in securing

business. Notwithstanding the distinguished physicians who occupied the field, he soon became a practitioner of mark; for Fortune seems to have showered upon him more than an ordinary share of her favors. His principal competitors in surgery, among the older members of the profession, were Dr. Richard Kissam and Dr. Wright Post, men of acknowledged ability, and of distinguished reputation. The former was for thirty years one of the surgeons of the New York Hospital, and was particularly celebrated as a lithotomist. Of sixty-five operations which he performed for the relief of vesical calculus, only three proved fatal; a degree of success rarely equalled anywhere. Dr. Post was Professor of Surgery in Columbia College, and it was under his teaching that young Mott became first thoroughly enamored with that branch of the profession which he subsequently so much adorned. His merit as a surgeon was very great, and, until his pupil came upon the stage, his only rivals in America were Physick and Warren. His name is honorably associated with a number of brilliant operations, the more remarkable because they were performed at a time when such exploits were comparatively uncommon. To him belongs the credit of having been the first to tie successfully the subclavian artery above the clavicle, on the outer side of the scalene muscles, for the cure of axillary aneurism. Kis-

sam died in 1822, and Post six years after, thus leaving Mott in the undisputed possession of the field, if we except Dr. Alexander H. Stevens, who, after a career of great usefulness and honor, retired upwards of a quarter of a century ago from active practice, to his suburban residence at Astoria, where, surrounded by admiring friends and all the elegancies and refinements that can adorn human life, he is spending the evening of his days in undisturbed tranquillity and happiness.

The greatest of his earlier operations—that which gave him a world-wide reputation, and placed him in the very foremost rank of the illustrious surgeons of his day—was performed by Dr. Mott in May, 1818, in the thirty-fourth year of his age, and in the thirteenth year of his professional life. It was a feat which had never been accomplished before, and was nothing less than the ligation of the innominate artery, a small stunted vessel, hardly an inch and a third in length, arising from the aorta, within, practically speaking, fearful proximity to the heart. A careful study of Mr. Allan Burns' celebrated work on the Surgical Anatomy of the Head and Neck had long ago convinced him of the feasibility of the operation, and he had been in the habit, for several years, of exhibiting it upon the dead subject in his surgical lectures. With a steady hand, and a correct knowledge of the anatomy of the parts,

he knew it could be performed upon the living subject, and he only waited for a suitable opportunity to carry it into effect. This at length presented itself, in the person of Michael Bateman—his name deserves to be recorded—a sailor, a native of Massachusetts, fifty-seven years of age, the subject of an aneurism of the right subclavian artery. His first idea was to tie this vessel, if it should be sufficiently sound, on the inside of the scalene muscles; if not, to secure the innominate artery. The operation was performed on the 11th of May; and, after a careful dissection, it was ascertained that there was such an amount of disease as to render it necessary either to abandon the poor patient to his fate or to throw a ligature round the innominate artery. He did not hesitate. Doubtful whether so large a quantity of blood could suddenly be intercepted so near the heart without very serious effects upon the brain, he drew the cord very gradually, with his eyes intently fixed upon the patient's countenance, determined to withdraw it instantly if any alarming symptoms should arise. His feelings had been wrought to the highest pitch, and we may therefore easily imagine the relief he experienced when he perceived, to use his own language, "No change of feature or agitation of body." The arteries at the wrist at once ceased to beat, and the tumor was reduced to one-third of its original volume.

A minute diary of the case was kept. Everything proceeded favorably, with every prospect of final recovery, until the twenty-third day, when hemorrhage to the amount of twenty-four ounces occurred, followed by excessive prostration. The bleeding recurred at intervals until the twenty-sixth day, when the man expired from sheer exhaustion. The ligature had separated at the end of the second week. The dissection showed the cause of death to have been ulceration of the wound, going on insidiously at the bottom, while the upper part was rapidly healing, and ruinously involving, to an extent nearly of one inch, the innominate, subclavian, and carotid arteries, which opened into the cavity of the aneurism, and were only partially occluded by coagula.

Although the operation proved fatal, the case fully established the practicability, and also the propriety, of its execution. Regretting this untoward circumstance, "I am happy," he says, "in the reflection, as it is the only time it has ever been performed, that it is the bearer of a message to surgery, containing new and important results." To appreciate the difficulty and danger of this operation it is necessary to remember that the ligature was placed within one inch of the aorta, the great trunk of the arterial system, that the pleura and lung were in close proximity, and,

lastly, that it held out to the poor patient the only chance of relief.

The operation thus initiated has been performed altogether about ten times, and in every instance, save one, death was caused by hemorrhage from the wound, either from the want of occlusion of the ligated artery, or of the carotid and subclavian. In the case of Von Graefe, who was the first to repeat the operation, the patient, for a long time supposed to be out of danger, perished on the sixty-seventh day.

The last time in which this vessel was secured was in 1864. The case was one of traumatic aneurism of the subclavian artery, and the intrepid operator, Dr. A. W. Smyth, of New Orleans, influenced by the sad experience of the past, tied at the same time the common carotid. Notwithstanding this precaution, repeated hemorrhages occurred, and the patient would have perished if the vertebral artery, the source of the bleeding, had not also been at length ligated. This operation was performed fifty-four days after the first, and eventuated in complete recovery. Thus, after the lapse of nearly half a century, it has at length been demonstrated that ligation of the innominate artery alone for aneurism of the subclavian or carotid is incapable of effecting a cure. In order to succeed it is necessary at the same time

to secure one of these vessels and likewise the vertebral, as in the case of Dr. Smyth, otherwise death from secondary hemorrhage will be inevitable. It reflects no discredit upon Dr. Mott's judgment that he did not, in his operation, foresee this necessity. The attempt to tie an artery so near the heart was in itself an extremely bold undertaking. Great truths are generally unravelled slowly, step by step, as it were. The mind does not all at once grasp the leading points of a grand subject. At first all is dark and mysterious; it is only by degrees that light appears, doubt vanishes, and truth presents herself in all her loveliness. It is sufficient honor for Mott to have been the pioneer in such a noble enterprise. He was in ecstasy over the success of Dr. Smyth's case. In a copy of that gentleman's report of the operation, kindly sent me by Mott, the great surgeon said: "I know you will be delighted with this *crowning jewel.*"

In 1821, Dr. Mott excised the right side of the lower jaw of a young woman, the subject of osteosarcoma, having previously, as a means of preventing hemorrhage, secured the primitive carotid artery. The operation, an account of which was published in the first volume of the "New York Medical and Physical Journal," was entirely successful, notwithstanding its formidable character. Afterwards, in three instances, he removed the

bone, with equally happy results, at the temporo-maxillary articulation.

When his first case occurred, Dr. Mott was not aware that a similar, though much less extensive, operation had been performed, in 1810, by Dr. W. H. Deadrick, of Tennessee. The reason of this was that no history of the operation was published until 1823, two years after the occurrence of the New York case, which at the time attracted much attention on account of its supposed novelty. Baron Dupuytren, in 1812, removed a large portion of the inferior maxilla for carcinoma. Although it is thus certain that Mott had been anticipated in these operations, both in the United States and in France, yet there can be no question that their success tended very greatly to lessen the fears of these undertakings, and to pave the way more effectually for their general adoption. The brilliant achievements of McClellan, of Philadelphia, and of Cusack, of Dublin, were directly traceable to the efforts of the New York surgeon to extend relief to a class of sufferers supposed for a long time to be beyond the pale of hope. The recent advances in this particular branch of chirurgery have proved that ligation of the common carotid artery, as a preliminary measure to prevent hemorrhage, even when the morbid growth is of extraordinary bulk, may safely be omitted.

Amputation at the hip-joint, by which nearly

one-fourth of the entire body is removed, was performed by Dr. Mott in 1824. The patient, a lad ten years of age, had been much exhausted by the effects of a badly-treated fracture of the thigh. Two-thirds of the stump healed by the first intention, and within six weeks the entire wound was closed. It was long believed by Dr. Mott and the profession generally that this had been the first operation of the kind ever performed in America; but many years after it was ascertained that he had been anticipated by Dr. Walter Brashear, of Bardstown, Kentucky, as early as 1806. No account of the case, however, had ever been published, and when Mott discovered his error he was among the very first to award to the western surgeon the credit so justly due him. His motto always was "Palmam qui meruit ferat." This credit is so much the greater because, when the operation was performed, Dr. Brashear had no precedent to guide him, as no information of the cases of Larrey, Guthrie, and other military surgeons of Europe had reached this country.

Excision of the clavicle, performed by Mott, in 1828, for osteo-sarcoma of that bone, is, in all respects, one of the most remarkable exploits in the history of surgery, if, indeed, it has any parallel. "It surpassed," he says, "in tediousness, difficulty, and danger, anything which I had ever witnessed or undertaken." The tumor, four inches

in diameter at its base, incompressible, of rapid growth, and of the volume of a man's doubled fist, had contracted the most powerful and extensive adhesions, and involved on all sides the most important structures. To guard against the entrance of air into the external jugular vein, an occurrence often followed by instant death, that vessel was secured, as a preliminary step, with two ligatures. The tumor being excessively vascular, the blood gushed forth so freely at every stroke of the scalpel as to render it necessary to tie not less than forty arteries, an occurrence probably without a parallel in the history of surgery. A faint idea of the magnitude and difficulty of the undertaking may be formed when it is stated that nearly four hours were consumed in its execution—a portion of the time in efforts to revive the patient from the effects of shock and loss of blood—and when it is recollected that the operator was one whose knowledge of surgical anatomy and manual dexterity have never been surpassed. Dr. Mott, with a pardonable vanity, called it his Waterloo operation, as it was performed on the 17th of June, the day before the anniversary of that famous battle which forever decided the destiny of Napoleon upon the throne of France.

An attempt has been made to deprive Dr. Mott of the honor of priority of this operation by ascribing it to Dr. Charles McCreary, of Hartford,

Kentucky, who, in 1813, removed the right clavicle, in a youth fourteen years of age, on account of a scrofulous affection. In a Report on Kentucky Surgery, drawn up by me in 1852, for the Kentucky State Medical Society, of which I was one of the founders, and for one year President, I myself gave currency to that idea; but I am now, after a more careful study of the two cases, perfectly satisfied that they had nothing whatever in common with each other, and that Dr. Mott is fully entitled to all the merit that can attach to such a procedure. The case of Dr. McCreary was one simply of caries, or of caries and necrosis, and required no particular dexterity for the removal of the bone, as it was but little, if any, enlarged, and not encroached upon in any manner whatever by the surrounding structures. On the contrary, it was comparatively isolated, and therefore easily detached. The operation, in fact, was such as any one, even the veriest tyro in surgery, could have performed. In Dr. Mott's case matters were altogether different. The difficulty and danger were immense, and there was a tumor of large size with the most intimate and powerful adhesions that can be conceived of, in close proximity not only with large arteries, veins, and nerves, but even the pleura and lung, and which only a surgeon of the most consummate coolness and dexterity could sever. I doubt very much whether the annals of

surgery, ancient or modern, present a parallel case, one requiring such an amount of anatomical knowledge, judgment, skill, and patience. I consider it as by far the very greatest of all Dr. Mott's operations, not excepting those upon the innominate and primitive iliac arteries.

The patient, a youth of nineteen years, not only rapidly recovered from the immediate effects of the operation, but in less than twelve months regained the perfect use of the corresponding extremity. The small acromial end of the bone, left behind in the operation, had formed permanent adhesions with the surrounding parts, and thus maintained the shoulder in its normal position.

A perfect cure of hydrorachitis, a congenital affection, usually called spina bifida, or cleft-spine, is, under any circumstances, even the most favorable, an extremely uncommon occurrence. Dr. Mott had the proud satisfaction of saving two children by operative interference. The first case came under his observation in 1830. The tumor, situated in the lower portion of the back, and in volume nearly equal to a goose's egg, was included in an elliptical incision, and the wound, which united by the first intention, closed with interrupted sutures and adhesive plaster. The patient, nine years of age, rapidly recovered, and subsequently enjoyed vigorous health. In the other case, involving the cervico-dorsal region, a similar

operation was performed on the ninth day after birth, with results not less gratifying.

In the ligation of arteries he was "facile princeps;" absolutely without a rival. No surgeon, living or dead, ever tied so many vessels, or so successfully, for the cure of aneurism, the relief of injury, or the arrest of morbid growths. The catalogue, inclusive of the celebrated case of the innominate artery, already described, comprises eight examples of the subclavian artery, fifty-one of the primitive carotid, two of the external carotid, one of the common iliac, six of the external iliac, two of the internal iliac, fifty-seven of the femoral, and ten of the popliteal; in all one hundred and thirty-eight.

His great operation for tying the common iliac artery for the cure of aneurism came off in 1827, and was completely successful. In only one instance before had this vessel been secured in the living subject. The case alluded to occurred in 1812, in the practice of Dr. William Gibson, then Professor of Surgery in the University of Maryland, and afterwards in the University of Pennsylvania, the patient having been wounded in the abdomen by a musket-ball during the riots in Baltimore. He survived the operation thirteen days, the immediate cause of death being peritonitis and secondary hemorrhage. The case is one of profound interest, inasmuch as it served to establish, in the most irrefragable manner, a great

principle in the operative surgery of the arteries, that the largest vessel of this kind may be obliterated, and yet the circulation in the extremities go on with perfect freedom. Mott's case was one of aneurism, of immense size, of the external iliac artery, and the operation was attended with great difficulty on account of the extensive disease of the vessel. The ligature was placed within half an inch of the aorta. The patient recovered without an untoward symptom.

The next operation upon this vessel was performed by Sir Philip Crampton, of Dublin, in 1828, with an unfavorable result. The statistics of twenty-seven cases, tabulated by Dr. Stephen Smith, of New York, in 1860, exhibit eleven in which the artery was tied for the arrest of hemorrhage with only one recovery, and fifteen in which it was secured for aneurism, with five cures and ten deaths.

Dr. Mott possessed peculiar skill in the treatment of hare-lip. Many of the worst cases of this malformation that fell into his hands were so effectually cured as to render it difficult, a few years after the operation, to detect any traces of the original defect.

I am unable to say what his success was in rhinoplasty, or in the formation of new noses; a branch of surgery so ably practised by Taliacotius in the sixteenth century, and so greatly perfected

by Graefe, Dieffenbach, Serre, Zeis, Pancoast, Fergusson, and others in our own day. It is well known that he took a deep interest in the reconstructive surgery of the lips and cheeks, formerly so often mutilated by the injudicious use of mercury, and he has published the particulars of a number of successful cures. One of these cases occurred as early as 1825, and deserves allusion on account of the immense size of the gap, for filling which he was compelled to borrow a large flap of integument from the neighboring surface.

One of the most distressing accidents that can possibly befall a human being is immobility of the lower jaw, dependent upon anchylosis of the temporo-maxillary articulation. This affection, usually caused by salivation, was formerly exceedingly common in all sections of this country, but more especially in the Southwestern States, owing to the inordinate use of mercury in almost every form of disease, however trivial. As a natural consequence of this wretched practice, fortunately now obsolete, numerous cases of mortification both of the jaw-bones, and of the gums, lips, and cheeks occurred, leading to the most distressing deformity, and the necessity almost of a new branch of surgery. Dr. Mott had a full share of such cases. In 1812, soon after his settlement in New York, a most distressing one fell under his notice, and elicited his most lively sympathy.

The success which attended his efforts at restitution excited much interest in the profession, and induced him to bestow special attention upon the subject. After much reflection he finally constructed an instrument upon the screw and lever principle, for prying open the jaw after the excision, as a preliminary step, of the inodular tissues. In referring afterwards to the work of Scultetus, the "Armamentarium Chirurgicum," published in the seventeenth century, he found, much to his surprise, almost a fac-simile of his own instrument, just as Robert Liston, in the same work, found a figure and description of what modern surgeons have generally been pleased to call Liston's bone-forceps; so true is it that there is nothing new under the sun.

An operation which added greatly to his fame, as an expert and daring surgeon, was performed by him, in 1841, for the removal of an immense fibroid tumor, filling up the entire nostril, and dipping far down into the pharynx. The suffering was so excessive as seriously to impair the man's general health. After many fruitless efforts to effect riddance by different surgeons, Dr. Mott finally accomplished the object by the division of the nasal and maxillary bones in front of the face, rendered necessary to afford free access to the morbid growth. The operation, though not the first of the kind, was the most extensive and diffi-

cult that had ever been performed for such a purpose, and was followed by complete recovery.

As a lithotomist he stood in the very foremost rank. He was a strong advocate of the lateral method, which he always, like Cheselden, by whom the operation was so greatly perfected, performed with the bistoury. He considered the gorget as a clumsy, unwieldy, unscientific instrument, unfit for such a purpose. He fully indorsed the views of Mr. Liston, who declared that the gorget looked more like a "flauchter-spade," an implement for cutting turf, than an instrument for performing a delicate surgical operation. In 1855, he wrote to me that he had operated 162 times, with a loss only of seven patients, or in the ratio of one in twenty-seven; a success of which few surgeons, ancient or modern, can boast. He afterwards had three other cases, making in all 165. He extracted the largest stone that was ever removed from the living body, its weight being seventeen ounces and two drachms. The patient, an aged man, lived several days after the operation.

Other operations, many of them of great magnitude and delicacy, might be mentioned, but this is unnecessary, the more especially as I have already considerably exceeded the limits I had intended to assign to this branch of the subject. His great and crowning exploits were, the ligation of the innominate artery, the excision of the collar bone,

and the ligation of the common iliac artery, the first successful example of the kind upon record. All these were really wonderful performances, at the time of their occurrence without a parallel in the history of surgery.

Dr. Mott possessed, in an extraordinary degree, all the qualities of a great operator—an eye that never quailed, a hand that never trembled, and a mind so well disciplined as to be capable of meeting every emergency. His dexterity in the use of the knife and the more delicate manipulations has rarely been equalled, certainly never excelled. He cut almost as easily with one hand as with the other. His natural gifts, his intimate knowledge of surgical anatomy, for a long time his daily study, and his vast opportunities, placed him at an early period of his life in the foremost rank of great operators.

It must not, however, be supposed that he was a mere operator, or that he had an inordinate fondness for the use of the knife. Nothing could be more untrue. He possessed attributes of a much higher and nobler quality. He was, as every surgeon, with the slightest pretension to the name must be, an accomplished physician, a close observer of disease, acute in diagnosis, and perfectly familiar with the nature and uses of remedies, in the efficacy of which he was a firm believer. It is deeply to be regretted that mankind so sel-

dom know the real differences between the mere operator and the educated, skilful, and enlightened surgeon. The one delights in the use of the knife and the display of instruments; he cuts without discrimination or judgment, and often selects the very worst cases, on account of the éclat they may elicit. He knows little of therapeutics, and conducts his after-treatment without regard to consequences. The surgeon, on the contrary, is a man of science; he is essentially conservative, and, hence, employs the knife only as a dernier resort; he has great confidence in the resources of Nature, carefully watches his patient, and uses a thousand stratagems to waylay and combat disease. The one is a curse; the other a blessing. The knife's-man is a disgrace to the profession; the conservative surgeon an ornament and an honor. I know of no being more contemptible than one who cuts merely for the sake of a fee, or the pitiful notoriety it may secure him.

To be a great surgeon, a great operator, a great teacher, was the measure of Dr. Mott's ambition, the dream of his youth, the glory of his riper years. He cultivated surgery with a rare singleness of aim; it was with him "totus in illis;" everything was subordinated to the accomplishment of that particular end. Much of his success was due to his accurate knowledge of surgical anatomy; he knew the relative position of every

artery, and vein, and nerve, and muscle, as thoroughly as a child knows its alphabet. He could shut his eyes, and see everything as clearly as if it had been reflected from a mirror. He tells us, in one of his introductory discourses, that he never performed a great or difficult operation upon the living subject without having first performed it upon the dead. The fact is, he had a passion for dissecting; and, although he was not, like Vesalius, obliged to rob the gibbet for subjects, he had often not a little trouble in obtaining them. The younger physicians of New York, who pursue their studies under the peaceful operation of the Anatomy Bill, enacted less than twenty years ago, know nothing of the perils and hardships which attended dissections in the early days of Mott.

Another great element of power was his knowledge of morbid anatomy. It may safely be affirmed that no man can be a surgeon, in the true and more exalted sense of that term, unless he is well informed upon this subject. Dr. Mott fully appreciated the importance of this study at the very outset of his professional life, and he therefore lost no opportunity of enlarging his knowledge of it by dissections and post-mortem examinations. His museum was a noble collection of morbid specimens, from which he must have derived lessons of the greatest value as a diagnostician and therapeutist.

CHAPTER V.

LITERARY, EDUCATIONAL, AND OTHER LABORS.

Writes little—New York Medical and Surgical Register—Book of Travels—Velpeau's Surgery—Introductory and other discourses—College teaching—Private pupils—Prize medals—Connection with hospitals.

As a literary man Dr. Mott has left behind him no monument to perpetuate his name. His writings, unfortunately, are very limited. It is deeply to be lamented that a practitioner of such vast experience should have failed to record his observations for the benefit of his profession and of mankind. Considering his immense opportunities, public and private, for studying diseases and accidents, and the astonishing number of operations which he performed, from the most insignificant, as the excision of a little tumor, to the amputation at the hip-joint, the ligation of many of the principal arteries, and the removal of gigantic morbid growths, the loss thus sustained cannot be too much deplored. He might have published a vast treatise on clinical surgery, drawn entirely from the field of his own observations, and thereby enriched, if not enlarged, the domain of his profession. Writing, however, was evidently distasteful to him; and, perhaps, distrustful of his powers,

he might have recalled to mind the fact that few works, especially if composed early in life, long survive their authors. Lacordaire has not exaggerated the truth when he said: "After a century or two from their appearance, only a very few of the books even of the great writers are read." The sarcastic remark of Voltaire concerning Rousseau's "Ode to Posterity" is eminently true of professional works — few reach their address. Mott's life was too incessantly engrossed by the cares and toils of his profession to leave him any leisure for extended authorship. Nothing is so well calculated to destroy one's literary taste as constant fatigue and worriment of mind, the common lot of those engaged in large practice, especially surgical, of the responsibility of which few persons can form any just estimate. The great bulk of Dr. Mott's strictly medical and surgical writings consists of reports of cases and operations scattered through the periodical press. They deserve to be collected in book form. Of his later clinical lectures, delivered in the University of the City of New York, an abstract was published some years ago by one of his pupils, Dr. Samuel W. Francis. He had himself long contemplated the composition of a work on the capital operations and new processes in surgery, of which he considered himself as the legitimate originator;

but, from some cause or other, he died without accomplishing his purpose.

In 1818, he founded, along with Dr. John Watts and Dr. Alexander H. Stevens, the "New York Medical and Surgical Register," designed mainly as a repository of the more important cases and operations occurring in the New York Hospital, of which they were the professional attendants. The work was modelled after the "Dublin Hospital Reports," a celebrated periodical, replete with instructive matter, often referred to, even at the present day, on account of the valuable information it affords. The Register was, unfortunately, short-lived; for it ceased after the publication of the first volume. It will, however, always be an object of interest and attraction; first, because it was the first work of the kind ever issued on this side of the Atlantic, and, secondly, because it comprises the earlier publications of three physicians, who, all in turn, occupied, though in different degrees, a high position in public and professional esteem.

In 1842, soon after his return to the United States, he published an account of his foreign tour, under the title of "Travels in Europe and the East," in an octavo volume of upwards of four hundred pages. It attracted much attention at the time, and encountered a great deal of severe and ungenerous criticism from the medical press

of this country. Many of its chapters are of absorbing interest, but by far the most entertaining and instructive portion of the work is that which relates to his journey through Greece.

In 1842, '43, and '44, he superintended the translation, by Dr. P. S. Townsend, of Professor Velpeau's treatise on Operative Surgery; a vast storehouse, as is well known, of learning and research, precious alike to science and humanity; a legacy which the most gifted in the long and glorious line of French surgeons, from Ambrose Paré down, might have been proud to bequeath. Dr. Mott's principal part of the labor consisted of an elaborate preface and the addition of several hundred pages of new matter, made up, in great measure, of his previously published cases and reports. It need hardly be said that the contributions thus made materially enhanced the value of the original work. A new edition of the translation was issued, in 1856, with important notes and annotations, by Professor George C. Blackman, of Cincinnati.

In the preface to this work, Dr. Mott adverts to the fact that he had long been in the habit of employing the curvilinear incision, to which Mons. Velpeau justly attaches so much importance in operations upon the jaws and in resections of the bones generally. The Coryphæus of French surgery, who has described the advantages and supe-

riority of the proceeding with his accustomed clearness and ability, had evidently forgotten that the improvement was due mainly to the genius of his transatlantic confrère. Other operators have since claimed the paternity of this important practice.

The other published writings of Dr. Mott are limited to introductory and valedictory lectures, delivered to his classes at the opening and close of the sessions of the medical colleges; an inaugural discourse on the occasion of his assuming the duties of President of the New York Academy of Medicine; an address before the Trustees of the New York Inebriate Asylum at Binghampton; a sketch of the life of Dr. Wright Post; and a eulogy on Dr. John W. Francis. In 1862, he prepared, at the request of the United States Sanitary Commission, a paper on the use of anæsthetics, for the benefit of our army surgeons; and afterwards, for the same body, a valuable article on the means of suppressing hemorrhage in gunshot and other injuries, intended mainly as a guide for wounded soldiers on the field of battle. He also contributed several interesting and instructive communications to the Transactions of the New York Academy of Medicine; and one to the Royal Medical and Chirurgical Society of London on a peculiar form of congenital tumor of the skin, to which he applied the term "Pachydermatocele." The affection, which was not well

understood until it was described by Dr. Mott, is of rare occurrence, and consists essentially in a hypertrophied condition of the cutaneous and cellular tissues, forming masses, of various shapes and sizes, hanging as it were from the body. He met only with five cases of it. With the exception of notes to his lectures, he has left no MSS.

His style as a writer does not require criticism. It is plain, simple, intelligible, unambitious. His clinical reports are models of brevity and clearness.

As a public teacher, Dr. Mott occupied a prominent position. His name is affixed to the diplomas of thousands of pupils, who were wont to sit at his feet, as if he had been another Gamaliel, imbibing knowledge from the rich fountains of his mind, to qualify themselves for the successful practice of their profession. Commencing his career as a lecturer with a private course on anatomy the winter after his return from Europe, he taught surgery in the schools and hospitals of his adopted city for nearly half a century. Without any attempt at oratory or meretricious display, which no man ever more despised, he was thoroughly master of his subject, and had the rare faculty of making himself understood by the dullest intellect. He never committed to memory or wrote out his lectures; a few notes carefully digested and the dissection always before him furnished sufficient topics to carry him rapidly and

pleasantly through the hour. His manner in the amphitheatre was quiet and dignified; his voice clear and distinct. His discourse was often enlivened by a piquant anecdote, illustrative of some point of practice, or of some great operation, of which, perhaps, he himself was the principal part. He always drew largely from the stores of his own experience. With theory he had little to do. Emphatically a teacher of facts, he never failed to be interesting and instructive. His great forte was clinical teaching, which no one ever knew how to set off to better advantage. On such occasions he was generally very animated, frequently facetious, always edifying. The student felt how much he had learned, and he often lingered behind after the exercises had closed, to obtain a nearer look at the object of his adoration. This feeling, so natural in youths, not unfrequently leads to the warmest attachments between the pupil and the preceptor, and is one of the most gratifying circumstances in the life of a public teacher.

As a lecturer, he is said to have occasionally been too egotistical. Vanity is a trivial fault, which, in one who had so much to be vain of, might well have been overlooked. A celebrated American phrenologist was in the habit of saying, in speaking of the size of the brain: "Ladies and gentlemen, modern times have produced only three

really great heads: one is that of Daniel Webster, the second that of Edmund Burke, and the third," gracefully carrying his hand to his own, "modesty forbids me to mention." The vanity of the great surgeon never offended against good taste.

Mott never felt more at home than in the amphitheatre, surrounded by his pupils. He delighted to instruct them, to watch the development of their knowledge, and to infuse into them some of his own enthusiasm. Lord Eldon, it is said, never was so happy as when he was in Westminster Hall, in the midst of the members of the bar, explaining some great and knotty point of law; and the great surgeon experienced similar gratification in expounding to his youthful and ingenuous auditors the principles and practice of his favorite branch of science.

His private pupils were numerous, especially in the earlier part of his career, and are scattered, far and wide, over this vast continent, disseminating his doctrines, and illustrating his practice. Not a few of them have shone with the reflected light of their illustrious master, while others, more fortunate, have risen by the force of their intellectual powers to great and deserved eminence as teachers and practitioners. Who can estimate the vast amount of good which a great surgeon, occupying a high social and professional position, may confer upon mankind through his pupils? The seed

thus sown may be transmitted to the most remote ages, increasing in vigor and freshness as it descends along the stream of time.

His regard for medical students induced him in 1856, as a means of encouragement, to institute three prize medals for the best dissections and clinical reports in the University of the City of New York. The awards were made annually, on commencement day, to the three most distinguished pupils up to the time of his death, and the example thus set has had the effect of inciting similar enterprises on the part of other eminent teachers. In his Will he ordered a fund to be set apart for the perpetuation of these prize medals, the great object of which is the promotion of the pupil's welfare, not the gratification of any selfish vanity. "I shall be cheered," he remarks, "both now and hereafter, by the thought that I have thus been enabled to show my regard for him. I shall be cheered by the thought that any little distinction, which the possession of this medal shall obtain for him, may enable him more manfully and successfully to contend with the vicissitudes of life. I shall be still more cheered by the thought that, perhaps, the last words I shall ever utter, in relation to the recollections and associations which this emblem recalls and inspires, shall enable him to meet his fate with serenity, when, like me, he is preparing for the messenger of death."

The preparations accruing from the award of these prizes were always added to his museum, comprising nearly 1000 specimens in healthy and morbid anatomy, besides a considerable number of casts, wax models, and paintings. The pathological specimens were the product principally of his own surgical operations, many of which were of a very formidable character. It was by far the largest collection of the kind in the country, and upwards of half a century had been spent in its accumulation. The great majority of the preparations, properly so called, were made with his own hands. The museum was particularly rich in tumors, aneurisms, and diseased bones, joints, arteries, and bladders. The specimens were all arranged according to their respective affinities, and were illustrated by a comprehensive catalogue, published in 1858. It is with sorrow that I add that nearly the whole of this valuable and magnificent collection was lost in the burning of the edifice of the University Medical College in 1866, shortly after the death of its distinguished owner.

Dr. Mott's career, as a public lecturer, was a remarkably checkered one. He was connected with quite a number of medical schools, and had, consequently, had many colleagues. With all of them he lived on the very best terms—with some of them, indeed, on terms of intimacy—and there was not an individual with whom he ever had any

serious misunderstanding; indeed, hardly a word of difference. He had, of course, his views and opinions, but he never attempted to enforce them against the wishes, feelings, or prejudices of others. He was too amiable and courteous a man to quarrel; a mode of settling questions at one time, unfortunately, too common in American medical schools.

Dr. Mott's official connection with charitable institutions was long and extensive. Soon after his return from Europe, in 1809, he was appointed Surgeon to the New York Hospital, one of the oldest and most celebrated eleemosynary establishments in America, affording vast opportunities for the study and treatment of diseases and accidents. He retained his connection with the Hospital until 1835, when failing health compelled him to retire. Many of his most brilliant and daring exploits were performed within its walls, and it was there, in the presence of admiring pupils, that he delivered many of his most able and valuable courses of clinical instruction; a branch of education which he afterwards more fully elaborated as Professor of Surgery in the University of the City of New York.

On his return from his foreign travels, he reentered the Hospital, but finally severed his connection with it, in 1850, on the occasion of his third visit to Europe. He was afterwards, for

fifteen years, associated as Senior Consulting Surgeon with Bellevue Hospital; and he also served, for some time, in a similar capacity, St. Luke's Hospital, the Jews', St. Vincent's, and the Women's Hospital, in the latter of which he always felt the deepest interest. On the 8th of December, 1866, a tablet, erected to his memory at Bellevue Hospital, was unveiled. It is situated in the main hall opposite to the stone upon which Washington stood when the oath of office as President of the United States was administered to him by Chancellor Livingston. It bears the following inscription:—

In Memoriam. Valentine Mott, M. D.; born, August 20th, 1785; died, April 26th, 1865:—a pioneer in Surgery of world-wide fame, his name is embalmed in the operations which he devised, in the far-reaching influence of his instructions, and in the kindly recollections of his life. In grateful remembrance of his valuable and voluntary services during a period of fifteen years as Consulting Surgeon of Bellevue Hospital, this tablet has been erected by the Commissioners of Public Charities and Corrections of the City of New York, A. D. 1866.

CHAPTER VI.

LAST ILLNESS.

Last illness — Funeral — Personal appearance — Marriage — Memorial Library — Family.

WITH the exception of an occasional brief indisposition, Dr. Mott, after his return from Europe in 1841, enjoyed excellent health to within a few months of his last illness, when his family and friends began to notice a manifest decline in his physical powers, attended with erratic pains, chiefly seated in the back and limbs, and, now and then, exceedingly severe. Time, in its onward course, had made little outward impression upon him. At my last interview with him in the autumn of 1863, he was as erect, and, apparently, as active, as when I first met with him upwards of a third of a century before. The frosts of eighty winters had hardly touched his hair. His mind, always clear and well poised, had undergone no change. His equanimity, his temperance, and his regular habits had maintained the machinery of his body in the best possible condition for the attainment of longevity and the enjoyment of physical and mental comfort. Without care, in the undisputed possession of every earthly source of happiness—

wealth, fame, friends, and a family that literally worshipped him—his life was one of uninterrupted serenity. So well, indeed, were all the faculties of his mind and body preserved that he continued to operate up to the close of his life. It was only occasionally, as when the case was one of uncommon delicacy, and when, from some cause or other, his hand was not as steady as usual, that he would resign the knife to his son, Dr. Alexander B. Mott, who for the last sixteen years of his life had been his constant assistant.

His last illness was brief. On Saturday, April the 22d, he left his house, as had been his wont, at 1 o'clock, apparently in excellent health and spirits, to make his morning rounds. He had, however, hardly been gone an hour, when he came back in a violent rigor, his teeth chattering, and his whole frame shivering with cold. He complained of severe pain in his right leg and of a sense of extreme exhaustion. The limb gradually assumed a purplish and œdematous aspect, but the pain soon entirely ceased, and long before death came to his relief all physical suffering had vanished. Everything was done, but in vain, by his physicians, aided by the wise counsel of his able, learned, and distinguished friend, Professor Austin Flint, to avert the fatal shafts of death. He expired at his residence, Gramercy Park, at a quarter past 11 o'clock, April the 26th, 1865.

He retained his consciousness to the last, and sunk into his long rest without a struggle, softly and gently as a child falls asleep upon its mother's breast. The last words he uttered were, "Order, Truth, Punctuality;" fitting expressions for one whose whole life had been an exemplification of the force of their import.

Although he had reached the age of fourscore years—a period when life is usually held by a feeble tenure—yet the news of his death created universal grief. The medical profession, whose honored head he had so long been, felt that it had suddenly been deprived of one of its greatest ornaments, and the city of New York, for so many years the scene of his labor and renown, mourned as a city only can mourn when it loses one of its conscript fathers.

The funeral took place on Sunday, April the 31st, in the presence of an immense concourse of citizens, all anxious to testify their respect and esteem. The medical profession attended in a body. Many of the most prominent divines, lawyers, literary men, artists, and merchants were present. The coffin, placed in the Church of the Transfiguration, was decorated with the choicest flowers, emblems of purity and affection, reflecting the fragrance of a well-spent life. The body was deposited in Greenwood Cemetery, in the family vault, built under his own instructions, ten years

previously, in the form of a chapel with fifteen marble catacombs, in the highest central one of which are his remains. A niche above is to be occupied by his bust, from the chisel of the distinguished sculptor, Mr. Ward, of New York. On the marble slab which seals the chamber are inscribed these words:—

"Valentine Mott, M. D., LL. D., born at Glencoe, Long Island, August 20th, 1785; died in New York, April 26th, 1865.

My implicit faith and hope are in a merciful Redeemer,
Who is the Resurrection and the Life. Amen, Amen."—V. Mott.

The personal appearance of Dr. Mott was eminently prepossessing. Tall and erect, with broad shoulders, and a fine muscular development, he had an open, handsome countenance, a frank, manly expression, and a dignified yet cordial manner. His stature was fully six feet, his forehead high and prominent, the mouth small, the nose aquiline, the chin round and dimpled, the eye large, of hazel hue, and shaded by a heavy brow, and the hair, in early life, nearly black with a slight inclination to brownish. His features were regular, and indicative of the benevolence which formed so remarkable a trait in his character. It has already been stated that he was for a long time known by the sobriquet of the handsome Quaker Doctor. He retained his good looks until his death. Even his sight was excellent to

the last. He never wore glasses, except at night, or when he had a very delicate operation to perform. In old age his hearing and his touch never lost their delicacy, and he was always proud of his light, elastic tread. In his dress and in his habits he was the very perfection of neatness. He did not lay aside entirely the external characteristics of the Quaker until his visit to Europe in 1835.

In 1819, Dr. Mott married Louisa Dunmore Mums, a lady of English descent, congenial temper, great personal attractions, elegant manners, and rare intellectual endowments. The possession of such a wife was the crowning happiness of his long and well-spent life. The union lasted nearly forty-six years. Since his death Mrs. Mott has publicly manifested her high appreciation of his character by the purchase, at a cost of upwards of $30,000, of a suitable edifice for the accommodation of "The Mott Memorial Library," lately incorporated by an act of the Legislature of New York. It is a monument of affection and esteem, reared wholly at her own expense, and is a beautiful exhibition of devotion, of which history presents few examples. Among the most remarkable instances in this country are those of Mrs. Mütter, who built St. Luke's Chapel at Middletown, Connecticut, in commemoration of her husband, the late Dr. Thomas D. Mütter, formerly Professor of Surgery in the Jefferson Medical College of Phila-

delphia; and of Mrs. Dudley, who erected the Dudley Observatory at Albany, in honor of her husband. The story of Artemisia is familiar to every classical scholar. When she lost her husband, a monarch remarkable for his accomplishments and exalted character, she abandoned herself to the wildest grief; but, at length, rising superior to her sorrow, she reared that splendid monument which formed one of the seven wonders of the world, and which, after the lapse of thousands of years, still bears the name of Mausolus.

The Memorial Library contains Dr. Mott's medical books, with a number of works contributed, since his death, by his former personal friends; is free to medical students and physicians generally; and was formally inaugurated on the 11th of October, 1866. The collection, without being extensive, comprises a choice assortment of the best surgical treatises, ancient and modern, and also a large number of medical pamphlets, many of which date as far back as the commencement of the present century. In the principal room are his desk and library chairs, with a highly finished bust of himself. His Bible and Prayer Book, the constant companions of his long life, occupy their accustomed places, and are truthful witnesses of the piety and excellence of his character. The walls are hung with portraits of himself, Lettsom, John Hunter, Francis, McLean,

and others, worthy inmates of an institution designed to perpetuate the usefulness of a great and good man. The old library clock, so often wound up with his own fingers, stands upon one of the mantels, with the minute hand pointing to a quarter past 11 o'clock, the period of his departure, a silent monitor of the uncertainty of life, and of the ravages of Time. A model of his right hand, the ready servant of his intellect in a thousand surgical exploits, taken in plaster-of-Paris after his death, is inclosed in a separate case.

In addition to these objects the apartment contains the surgical instruments of Dr. Mott, a choice and valuable collection, now, as their former owner, resting from their labor. His scalpels were mostly of English make, principally from the manufactory of Laundy. He was fond of his old instruments, the companions of his earlier career, and frequently employed them in preference to the more improved models of the day. In his last interview with Sir Astley Cooper, the evening before he left London, that great man presented him with a magnificent case of instruments, of his own invention, as a token of his friendship and regard; and a similar souvenir, consisting of a splendid set of amputating knives, made of the iron and wood of the Old London Bridge, was presented to him by Mr. Bransby B. Cooper, Sir Astley's nephew.

It is a quaint saying of Bacon that great men have no continuance, and the truth of the remark is confirmed by many striking examples in history. This was not, however, the case with Dr. Mott. His marriage was blessed with nine children, six sons and three daughters. One of the eldest sons, Valentine, served for some time as Surgeon-in-Chief of the Sicilian Army, and died at an early age of yellow fever at New Orleans in 1852. Dr. Alexander B. Mott, now the only member of the family in the profession, worthily represents his father's fame—often a most dangerous inheritance—and is rapidly rising into distinction as a successful operator and teacher. The number of his grandchildren, at the time of his death, was sixteen, of whom two bear his honored name.

CHAPTER VII.

CHARACTER AND HABITS.

Earnest professional devotion—Reputation as a great surgeon—Elected a Member of the Institute of France—Patriotism and politics—Professional fees—System and punctuality—Domestic habits—Religious views—Portraits and busts—Conclusion.

HAVING thus traced the career of Dr. Mott from the cradle to the grave, it will not be difficult to form a true estimate of his character as a member of a great and learned profession; a profession which, whether we consider its high antiquity, its sacred mission, or its genius and enterprise, is inferior to none other, not even divinity itself.

A close analysis will serve to show that his greatness does not consist in any one single act, operation, or achievement; not in any grand improvement, invention, or discovery; but in the entirety of the man, the perfection of his whole character, the *tout ensemble* of his life. There have been many physicians and surgeons of as much talent; many who have lectured as well; many who have handled the scalpel with as much dexterity; many, in a word, who, perhaps, have done some of these things even better than he,

and yet very few, indeed, who have combined these and other important qualities in the same degree as Dr. Mott.

Eminently fitted by nature and education for the medical profession, he devoted himself to its study and practice with all the energies of his soul. For a period of nearly two-thirds of a century he never for a moment swerved from his allegiance. He loved surgery as his mistress, and his constancy merited all the favors which she so lavishly showered upon him. He opened his account with posterity when he entered the profession, and perfected it at the early age of thirty-three, when he placed a ligature upon the innominate artery, almost in contact with the arch of the aorta; and he performed, as already stated, a greater number of capital operations than any surgeon that has ever lived. Long before he had reached the meridian of his life, his name had become a tower of strength throughout the length and breadth of this continent. If success be a measure of talent and genius, Mott was eminently great. The generation in which he lived, so prolific in illustrious surgeons, acknowledged no superior. The New World is as justly proud of Mott, Physick, McClellan, and Warren, as the Old of Dupuytren, Cooper, Graefe, Bell, or Liston; immortal names in surgery. If his genius was not dazzling, it burnt with a steady flame,

which was extinguished only with his last breath. The numerous scientific and literary honors that were showered upon him, both at home and abroad, are a flattering evidence of the high estimation in which he was held by his contemporaries in all parts of the civilized world.

A great surgeon is a kind of Lord High Chancellor, a Keeper of the Great Seal of State, as it were, to whose judgment are referred all cases of a grave or uncommon nature, whether of disease or accident, occurring within his bailiwick. He is supposed, from his superior knowledge, to be especially qualified to detect and rectify morbid action, to penetrate the most hidden secrets of the human frame, to perform the most delicate operations, to possess peculiar skill in the adaptation of mechanical appliances, and, in short, to meet, promptly and effectually, every emergency, however trying or unexpected. I unhesitatingly assert, without the fear of successful contradiction, that it requires as much intellect, talent, genius, and knowledge to form a great surgeon as it does to form a great lawyer, judge, divine, general, or statesman; and I hold that when a man has reached the highest point of professional distinction; when he stands upon a pinnacle where all men may see and study him, looming out in bold and prominent outline before the world, that it is an evidence, unmistakable and incontrovertible, of

true greatness. Few men, in any walk of life, ever attain the topmost round of the ladder of fame. Industry, steady and persistent, may accomplish much, but, unaided by genius, it is comparatively ineffective, if not positively barren of useful results. The drop of water incessantly falling may, in time, wear away the most solid rock; but it can never fashion the marble into the speaking statue of a Phidias or a Chantry.

True character is often mirrored forth by the most trivial circumstance. The virtues and the vices of persons are not, as has been justly remarked by Plutarch, in his account of Alexander, always seen to the best advantage in their most famous exploits. An insignificant act, a pithy saying, or a ready jest frequently affords a more correct insight into their character than a siege or a battle. Biography does not lift the veil of private life from idle curiosity; it respects the sanctity of the fireside; it pries into no family secrets. It merely portrays the æsthetic life—the soul which animates and beautifies the features of the picture on the wall. Dr. Mott was one of those pure and exalted beings who, worshipping God in Nature—

> "Find tongues in trees, books in the running brooks,
> Sermons in stones, and good in everything."

He was amiable and gentle almost to a fault. Harshness, jealousy, and bitterness never had a home

in his breast. His countenance beamed habitually with benevolence. He had a way to every man's heart. In him sorrow and suffering ever found a ready sympathizer. Like Sir Thomas More, "he upbore the weary, and gave drink to the thirsty, and reflected heaven in his face." In all the endearing relations of life—as son, husband, father—as a citizen, a Christian, and a member of an honored profession—his conduct was a model.

Few surgeons, certainly none in this country, have ever received so many testimonials of respect and esteem from medical, scientific, and literary societies, domestic and foreign, as Dr. Mott. It would be tedious, as well as foreign to my purpose, to enumerate the various honors thus conferred. It will be sufficient to mention a few only, because of the great gratification which they afforded him. Foremost among these was his election as a Foreign Associate of the Institute of France, an institution which, occupying the highest rank in the French Empire, is composed only of the more illustrious savans, men who possess some peculiar claim to consideration, either on account of their discoveries, their scientific attainments, extraordinary learning, or the great talent which they display in the exercise of their particular vocation. It holds in France the same position as the Royal Society of London in Great Britain, or the American Philosophical Society in

the United States, with this difference, that admission to membership is much more difficult. To have one's name enrolled in the list of Foreign Associates is therefore a high honor, which, until recently, no other American ever enjoyed. The compliment, shared by Sir Humphry Davy, Lord Brougham, and Sir John Herschel of England, Sir David Brewster of Scotland, Berzelius of Sweden, Humboldt and Ehrenberg of Germany, and Matteucci of Italy, was well merited. The Institute of France was founded in 1793, upon the ruins of the Academies of Inscriptions and Belles-Lettres and of Sciences, which were combined in one body under this title.

In 1852, he was made an Honorary Fellow of the King and Queen's College of Physicians of Ireland, an association founded soon after the middle of the seventeenth century. At the time of his election only twenty-six foreigners had received this compliment, he being the only American. He was a Member of the Surgical Society of Paris, of the Medical Societies of Berlin, Brussels, and Athens, and of the Medical and Chirurgical Society of London.

He was for many years President of the Medical Faculty of the University of the City of New York, and for some time President of the New York Academy of Medicine, in the establishment of which he took a very active part. He was a

warm friend of the New York Inebriate Asylum at Binghampton, and at the time of his death was its President. The University of Edinburgh conferred upon him the honorary degree of M. D., and the University of the State of New York the degree of LL. D.

Among his correspondents were many of the most distinguished surgeons and physicians of the United States and of Europe. Larrey, Roux, Civiale, Velpeau, Cloquet, Graefe, Cooper, Travers, Liston, Lawrence, Fergusson, and Knox were the principal foreign ones. The letters of these men would, if properly arranged, form an interesting volume.

The reminiscences of his foreign travels, embracing a period of seven years, were innumerable. He had always a ready fund of anecdote, and was, consequently, a most agreeable diner-out, although he rarely indulged in that pleasure. At his own table, where he led conversation, he seldom descended to the trifles of the day, was nervously impatient of interruption, or of an omission of etiquette, and always claimed and commanded a hearing.

Although he had travelled extensively abroad, he had seen but little of his own country outside of New York. He had never beheld the mighty Mississippi, our vast and magnificent lakes, dotting the surface like so many inland seas, our wide-

spread prairies, studded with myriads of gorgeous wild-flowers, or the majestic mountain scenery of Pennsylvania, Virginia, and Vermont. Many years ago I wrote to him, urging him to visit the South-western States, adding that no intelligent American gentleman should permit himself to die before he had seen that glorious section of our great and growing country. His reply was, "I am afraid of steamboat explosions." The last journey he ever undertook was a visit to Annapolis, as a member of a committee appointed by Government to examine into the condition of the Federal prisoners at the South. He rarely, even in his youth, went to any watering-places. For many years before his death the comforts of home were so essential to him that he could not dispense with them, and the crowd and confusion offered him no temptation. Lebanon and West Point were the only places of summer resort he could endure. The country, in fact, had no charm for him. He longed for his books and his patients, and he invariably came to town in the morning, returning in the evening. In 1846, he built, near the Bloomingdale road, an elegant and stately mansion, adorned with various kinds of trees and shrubbery, and surrounded with gardens, conservatories, and graperies, which he used as a summer retreat until the time of his decease.

He was rarely seen at places of amusement.

Whenever he visited the theatre, his interest in the play was almost childlike, a source of real pleasure and enjoyment. His mind, in a constant state of tension with grave thoughts, easily yielded to any outside gayety.

During his residence abroad his taste for pictures and the fine arts greatly grew upon him—for in early life he had no time, and, indeed, but little opportunity for its indulgence—and after his return the walls of his house were covered with copies of the old masters and originals of the very best schools. At that time few persons in this country encouraged the fine arts or cared to accumulate objects of virtu; but he was always surrounded by every elegance and luxury, and the bent of his mind made an atmosphere and a certain degree of display absolutely necessary to his comfort; a circumstance in strange contrast with the otherwise stern simplicity of his life, character, and occupation.

Dr. Mott, I believe, never occupied any official position apart from his profession. His name is not associated with any great state movement for the benefit of the public, except the establishment of the New York Inebriate Asylum, or with any measure for the improvement of his adopted city, although he always felt the deepest interest in its scientific, literary, humanitarian, and commercial prosperity. His confidence in his fellow-citizens

satisfied him that its welfare would not be permitted to suffer, and he deemed it more honorable to serve his profession than the public.

A true patriot, he loved his country with equal purity and fervor. Born soon after the establishment of her independence, he had been through a long lifetime an active witness of her rising greatness, and in the hour of her danger he experienced the same anxiety for her safety and ultimate restoration which a father feels for a loving daughter threatened with some malignant distemper. No one deplored more deeply than he the frightful sacrifice of life and morals and treasure sustained in the bloody conflict. The assassination of the chief magistrate of the nation greatly shocked and distressed him. He regarded it as an omen of ill import, as a stain, permanent and indelible, upon the country's escutcheon. His mind continually brooded over the sad event, and he never was himself again afterwards. From that moment death had marked him as his own. He was not seriously ill; but unhappy, despondent, melancholy, sick at heart, and frequently lost in reverie, as if his mind were absorbed in some deep, abstract study. Occasionally a gleam of sunshine stole upon him, only, it would seem, to render darkness the more visible.

In politics he was strictly conservative; he rarely went to the polls, and politicians he cor-

dially despised. In all great national questions his views were calm and clear, and his interest intense. A great reader of newspapers, he was constantly on the alert for information, and spared no pains to post himself thoroughly in Congressional debates and foreign affairs. During the progress of the war, his quiet, deliberate manner and feeling changed, and he became anxious and restless respecting the latest intelligence.

It is an interesting fact in the life of Dr. Mott that he inherited nothing from his father, save a good name and a respectable education. Such, however, was his success from the first hour of his professional career that he was always in easy circumstances, which increased so far that, before he was forty years of age, he had purchased a large double house in Park Place, then the fashionable part of the city, and set up what in those days was a very complete establishment, including a tutor for his children, men servants, carriages and horses.

His professional fees were always large, especially in the latter part of his life, when people readily paid any amount asked for his services. One thousand dollars was the largest sum he ever received for one individual operation, and this he obtained only twice. One of the patients was a lady from the Sandwich Islands. His estate at the time of his death was valued at nearly one

million of dollars, an immense sum for a professional man who was the architect of his own fortune, although it is indisputable that great surgeons make more money by their practice than great physicians. Baron Dupuytren, Sir Astley Cooper, and Von Graefe were all millionaires. Poor Liston, on the contrary, whose fame is still upon every one's lips, was hardly worth a few thousand pounds when he died. Dieffenbach was always in debt and in fear of the bailiff!

Dr. Mott was never idle. Reading, reflection, and observation were his daily occupation. He kept himself thoroughly posted in regard to the progress of his profession. The most minute details were familiar to him; and he always spoke with just pride of the rapid advances of the medical sciences. Everything that was novel, or calculated to throw light upon any obscure disease, or point of practice, at once elicited his closest attention. He hailed with enthusiasm the discovery of anæsthetics, of tenotomy, and of the proper treatment of vesico-vaginal fistule by our countryman, Dr. Marion Sims. In a word, he took the same keen interest in everything that related to his beloved profession on the day of his death as in the dawn and meridian of his existence. "Live," said the dying Christian, in his last and most earnest counsel to his brethren, "live for the good of mankind, for the alleviation of sickness and suf-

fering. Be ornaments to my beloved and honorable profession; fulfil your duties in every relation of life; but see that all else above yours be an interest in my Saviour and Redeemer, that you fail not to betake yourselves, as I did, to the Great Physician, and availing yourselves of all the means and remedies which He has provided, be healed forever of the manifold diseases of your souls."

These sentiments, breathed in the genuine spirit of Christianity, show the deep interest he felt in his profession, and the manner in which, in his opinion—an opinion shared by all good and honorable men—the physician should discharge his numerous duties and obligations. He looked upon medicine as a sacred pursuit, and upon its votaries as so many High Priests, anointed by God for their high and holy office.

As an illustration of the interest which he took in everything relating to the profession, and to his own personal improvement, I may here mention that Dr. Mott, in the winter of 1850 and '51, was a member of a class which attended the lectures of Dr. Goadby on microscopical anatomy, a subject then attracting much attention among New York physicians. The meetings were held in the evenings at Dr. Sabine's office, and I do not remember that he was ever absent from his post. And so it was with everything else; always busy, always in earnest, always keenly interested. His

vigilance was unceasing. No rust ever blunted the edge of his intellect. "Intentum enim animum quasi arcum habebat, nec longuescens succumbebat senectuti." The rays of science freely entered the chambers of his mind in the very nightfall of his existence. He was old only in years; fresh and vigorous in everything else.

System and punctuality were cardinal elements in his character. Order and precision predominated in all his habits, and were, along with steady, persistent industry, the means with which he performed his daily labor and achieved his vast reputation. His private office table on the morning he was seized with his last illness was piled a foot high with letters; but there was no confusion. He knew where everything was, and was able in a moment to place his hand upon it.

Possessed of an extraordinary memory, his mind retained every detail of any subject to which he directed his attention; hence his wonderful exactitude in all points of medical science and medical history. A professional friend, Professor Darling, of the University of the City of New York, who knew him intimately for many years, writing to me upon the subject, remarks that he had never met with any physician, either in this country or in Europe, who had the details of the history of surgery so thoroughly at his command.

His mental culture was extensive, and he pos-

sessed an amount of general information far beyond what is common among professional men. Hard student as he was in medical literature, he reserved time enough for the perusal of all the more important scientific and religious works and reviews. To keep pace with the progress of the age was his constant endeavor. His familiarity with the classics was surprising, and he often, in everyday conversation, indulged in allusions and quotations. One of the principal amusements of his leisure hours was the study of Johnson's Dictionary, a copy of which was always on his library table.

His domestic habits were characterized by great simplicity. When his health permitted they were uniformly the same. He daily rose at 7 o'clock, breakfasted at 8, and dined at 5, rarely taking anything in the interval, except, perhaps, a glass of water. The neatness and precision of his toilet were as remarkable in his advanced as in his younger years. At 9 o'clock he went into his office, and, except when interrupted by his college lectures or a call to attend to some urgent case, remained at home until 1 o'clock. He then rode out to see his patients, to attend to business, or to make social visits. His horses and carriage were always in perfect order; he was nervously fastidious about their being properly cared for, and they were never driven beyond a slow, dignified pace.

He never was in a hurry, and yet invariably in time. His evenings were always spent in his library, in reading, writing, or conversing with his friends. The advancement of science, the progress and improvement of the age, absorbed his mind and thoughts, and he enjoyed professional and literary reading with a keen relish.

Socially he visited very little in his latter years. A neuralgic affection of his arm, and sudden attacks of irregular action of the heart, rendered it necessary that he should avoid all excitement, and, above all, crowded rooms. He welcomed his friends when they called with great kindness, and was always happy to extend to them the hospitalities of his house. Leading a life of concentrated thought and action, he was chary of his time, and restive under idle intrusion. His most intimate friends were Thaddeus Phelps, an eminent merchant, at whose house he first made the acquaintance of Mrs. Mott, and Dr. John W. Francis, upon whom he pronounced the feeling eulogy alluded to in a previous page. He had many warm friends and admirers in the profession, and no physician or surgeon was ever more idolized by his patients, from whom he received numerous tokens of affection and esteem. In the family circle he was loving, gentle, genial, and full of tenderness. His intercourse with mankind was dignified and courteous. To his friends his man-

ners were most endearing. A gentleman of the old school, he was destitute of every selfish feeling, and he was ever ready to make any sacrifice for the good of others. To his dependants he was considerate, just, and kind-hearted. His enmities, like those of Cicero, were mortal; his friendships eternal. A gentleman, whose relations with Dr. Mott were most intimate, and who for sixteen years assisted him in many of his great operations, informs me that he never saw him angry.

Although originally a Friend, he ultimately gave his adhesion to the Episcopal Church, whose beautiful and sublime service had evidently made a deep impression upon his mind. A confession of his faith was found in a memorandum-book after his death. He had implicit confidence and hope in a merciful Redeemer, and in a future state of existence. He never delivered a discourse to his pupils, introductory or valedictory, or a public address of any kind, in which there was not a distinct recognition of the Christian religion. His Bible was his constant companion; and he was very fond of reading the Greek Testament, a small pocket edition of which always lay upon his office table.

Two busts exist of Dr. Mott; one taken by Brower at the age of forty; the other after death, by Ward. A portrait of him was painted by

Jarvis when he was thirty years old, and another, almost life-like, two years before he died, by Wenzler. He sat for his photograph, also an admirable picture, only a fortnight before his death. The artist, Rodgers, made a study of his face and figure for the statuette called the "Charity Patient." The face, which is too old, is painfully thin and common; but the figure, the compassionate gesture, is true to life. In 1835, previously to his departure for Europe, he sat, at the request of his private pupils, to Mr. Inman for a portrait which now hangs in the Governors' rooms at the New York Hospital, alongside of those of Bard, Post, Mitchill, and Hosack.

Thus lived and died VALENTINE MOTT, a man whose career cannot be contemplated without admiration and respect for the many virtues which adorned his character; a career which, for singleness of purpose, ardent love for the profession to which he was so long devoted, and all the amenities which distinguish the Christian gentleman, is as rare as it is beautiful. Posterity will recognize in him a representative man, patient in labor, steady in purpose, faithful in principle, true to his vocation, toiling to erect a great and permanent reputation, worthy of his age and country. Commencing his career during what may be called the formative stage of American surgery, he lived

to see this branch of the healing art established among us upon a broad and enduring basis, with thousands of followers, not a few of whom were his own pupils, actively engaged in unfolding its great principles, in upholding its dignity, and in advancing its interests. By the brilliancy of his surgical exploits he elevated the character of the American medical profession, and added lustre to the nation. His life affords a beautiful illustration of what a man, true to himself and his profession, may accomplish by the force of his intellect and the improvement of his time and opportunities. Surgery and he were indissolubly linked together. From the moment he entered upon its practice they became sworn friends, reciprocally giving, receiving, and honoring each other. Abandoning himself wholly to one particular object, to one distinct and definite aim, he nobly fulfilled his mission. This singleness of purpose was an element of power which few men have ever wielded with greater effect, and which the youths of our country, bent upon the acquisition of an honorable fame, and the accomplishment of great good to the human race, would do well to imitate. They would learn, by his example, that the only road to distinction and fortune is by patient labor, steady devotion, self-reliance, and unswerving principle.

It will not be inferred from what has here been

said of Dr. Mott that he was exempt from the infirmities of our common nature. To make such an assertion would be, to borrow the language of an elegant writer, a sacrifice of truth, and an empty compliment to the memory of a good man. He had his failings, but not one solitary vice. His life was one of unsullied purity. Whatever error he had was born with him; not the result of habit or education. He had a broad, expansive love for his race, a profound self-respect, and, to use an expression of Bishop Burnet, a soul as white as ever dwelled in a mortal body.